

# LONDON THE READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION AFRICA.]

No. 376.—VOL. XV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 16, 1870.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[FALSE CHIVALRY.]

## STRANGELY MARRIED.

BY ERNEST BENNETT.

Author of "Strayed Away," "Milly Lee," "John Kendrake's Destiny," &c.

### CHAPTER XVI.

I have but scant breath's time to help myself,  
And I must cast my heart out on a chance;  
So, bear with me! Chastelard.

MR. AND MRS. LENMORE adhered to the good old country custom of retiring to rest early. John sat up late, with May and his brother Will. They asked him what he thought of their father's investment, and he replied, rather thoughtfully, that he could tell them better when he went to London again.

May went and sat by John's side with her arms round his neck; he was seldom with her, and she liked to make the most of him while he was there. She loved both her brothers fondly; to her there were no such brothers in the world. John was no more her favourite than Will, but she was most fond of the former. Women admire physical strength, but their deepest respect is given to mental power.

"Have you heard anything of Fred yet?" said May, timidly. "Has he written, or been heard of?"

John shook his head.

"Not yet, little one."

"Do you think—" she began.

And then her voice faltered.

He patted her cheek caressingly.

"Do I think what?"

"Do you think anything has happened to him?"

No. You are, of course, aware that he is in pursuit of Mr. Dacre's defaulting steward, through whom Mr. Dacre is likely to sustain a heavy loss. Fred is a long way from home. He may have written, but the mails come in seldom."

The sound of a little sob surprised him. Putting his hand gently to her dimpled chin he turned her face towards his own. May Lenmore's dove-like eyes were full of tears.

"And so you like your old friend and playmate?" he said, unwilling to put a more serious construction on her emotions. "He will come back soon, May; but if those tears are for him, are they wise?"

The question was easier to ask than to answer. He might as well have inquired of himself whether it was wise to have his heart aching as it ached now, because the trouble that he feared was coming to his father threatened to defer the consummation of his own love-dream.

"Strange how the 'sweet wise madness' moves us all," he pondered. "Here is my brother Will lumbering like a helpless Titan into a state of blind worship for Mildred, when one would think he would choose some simple country girl; and May sets her heart upon a handsome, careless fellow, with the instincts of a good man and the habits of a reprobate—one who possibly never gave her a second thought; while I—I begin to think I am not much wiser than either."

Much as he longed to see Lizzie that night, it was too late, and he had to wait till morning. He slept in his brother's room, and Will talked till day-break, telling him everything that had happened during the last four months, from the little boy who fell into the duck-pond to the last meet of the hounds, when, after a run of seventeen miles, they didn't find the fox; and then, having exhausted every other topic, Will spoke of the Dalrymples.

"Did you ever see her?" he asked, rousing suddenly, and rousing John out of a dreamy condition, in which waking thoughts and sleepy fancies were curiously blended.

"Her?"

"Mrs. Dalrymple. A splendid lady she is, dark as a gipsy queen. The girls are very fond of her."

"What girls, Will?"

"Mildred and Lizzie. They go and stay there. Lizzie is at The Croft now; at least, she was yesterday."

"With the Dalrymples?" said John, with a troubled look.

He could not descend to jealousy, but the

thought of his peerless love in the house with that graceful, fascinating, and vain Italian was not a pleasant one.

"Yes; they exchange visits."

John mentally determined to make his visit earlier by an hour or two in the morning; and Will, after trying to remember something else, went to sleep quite unconscious that he had caused uneasiness or pain. John slept but little.

He took a horse and rode over to the Lodge by breakfast time, and was received by Mr. Dacre, the quietude of whose welcome was always sincere. There were few men less demonstrative in their friendship, fewer still whose friendship was more lasting.

"An early arrival," said the master of the Lodge.

"You have not breakfasted?"

"No. I came home last night, but there was so much to say that I could not get away."

Mr. Dacre rang for another service to be laid.

"Mildred will be down presently."

"And Lizzie?"

"Is staying with a friend—Mrs. Dalrymple. I begin to think we have, perhaps, been too suspicious in that quarter," Mr. Dacre added. "We English have a way of doubting whatever we do not thoroughly understand."

In an instant John Lenmore's strong judicial mind saw the change in Mr. Dacre, and began seeking a motive for it. He remembered Will's words, that Mrs. Dalrymple was a splendid lady.

"If you have seen him frequently you have had an opportunity of forming a true impression," he said; "and if we have misjudged him, I am glad. I like to think the best I can of my fellow-men."

"I have watched him very closely," said Mr. Dacre, "and his conduct is certainly straightforward. I ascertain that he has bought a small partnership in a London firm, and is a good man of business, working tolerably hard down here."

"He put a large sum of money into Mercer's, the bullion merchants of Lombard Street," observed John; "more than we can reasonably believe he made in so short a time."

"I do not know; he is a keen fellow, and out in

the colonies some men grow rich in a year. Then he had a private fortune."

"His mother mortgaged to the last shilling, and without his knowledge."

"Then you still suspect him?"

"No," said John; "I merely wait for proof, and fate is helping us. I came down last evening in the train with one who may be a very valuable witness—a huge, uncouth, and cunning mongrel, hailing, as he was kind enough to tell me, from Pentolina."

"A singular coincidence. Was he coming this way?"

"Yes, he got out at the station with me after some very interesting conversation, in which the names of Frederick Amory and Paul Dalrymple were mentioned without reserve. He was going to see his friend Dalrymple then."

"Pity that you lost sight of him."

"It would have been a pity had I done so. Fortunately there was a London friend of mine in the train, Falcon, the detective—whose name is not quite new to you—and I set him on the track of Mr. Harperley at once, and we shall soon hear news."

Mr. Dacre received the information with less eagerness than John Lenmore expected. His opinion of Paul had wavered round lately, and unconsciously to himself he would rather have let the matter rest altogether than found cause to doubt the stately widow's son. Again, he did not know in how much of this Mrs. Dalrymple's influence took part.

"Has Lizzie been at The Croft long?" inquired John, wisely choosing not to pursue a subject that did not interest Mr. Dacre at present.

"Four or five days. Mildred was with her, but I could not let both stay."

"Have I your permission to ride over for her after breakfast?"

"Most certainly. Take Mildred with you, if you like; but no—perhaps you would rather be *tête-à-tête*."

The smile on the young barrister's face assured him that he had not erred in that respect.

Mildred entered in the prettiest of morning costumes, and gave John an affectionate welcome. Her father's table would not have been complete without her. Let bachelors say what they will of their pleasures—the selfish bondage they call liberty is dearly bought when its price is the absence of the sweet sunshine a woman's presence sheds on heart and home.

"What were you thinking of, John?" asked Mildred, seeing him smile.

"Of the true philosophy of life."

"How was the thought suggested?"

"Simply by seeing you. I was thinking how much is lost by the men of the present day. Those who play the part of little cynics rail at woman-kind, talk of marriage as a life in fetters, and laugh at the simple beauties of a household. I have seen men in town who have no thought, no desire beyond their chambers and their club, and I pity them."

"Is life in chambers dull?"

"Not to me, who have my work, and in my work a purpose. I look forward to the time when it will give me a sweet wife, who will lend a tender and a human interest to all the trifling daily wants and cares—teach me that I have something more to live for than a life narrowed down to the ignoble desires of self."

"And all this thought comes of seeing me here?"

"Yes; the philosophy of our existence is told in little things—to pour out our own coffee is to be alone; to be tended by strangers, who do what they do for hire; to have it poured out by wife, or daughter, or sister, or mother, is to be associated with loving thoughts and gentle interest."

"Well said," observed Mr. Dacre; "you have the elements of happiness, John. Men with your shape of mind can be content without much wealth."

"Wealth is comparative. Some men are rich on half of what would be poverty to others. The golden secret of lasting pleasure is to live on what you have without envying others what they have."

"If I could find a second John Lenmore," thought Mr. Dacre, "how gladly would I give my daughter to him. Rich men who have never known the value of work find it easier to spend a fortune than to make one."

Though John Lenmore was too well-bred to show his anxiety, he was glad when the morning repast ended and his horse was brought to the door. He told Mildred where he was going.

"You have never seen Mrs. Dalrymple?" she said.

"Never."

"You will like her very much."

"Do you?"

"Very."

"Yes, you are motherless," thought the barrister, "and womanly kindness is sure to win your heart. What of her son," he said, aloud; "do you like him, too?"

"Oh, yes! He is very kind, attentive, and anxious to please. He has a deeper motive, perhaps, than he cares to show, but that will scarcely be a fault in your eyes."

"It depends upon the quality of the motive," said John, as he rode away. "Instinct rarely errs, and my instinct warns me against him."

He rode to The Croft, and sent in his card with Mr. Dacre's. They were taken to Paul Dalrymple, who felt a sort of savage jealousy, blended with exultation, when he saw the name.

"You have come too late," he muttered, with a sneer; "but you need not know your disappointment yet. Live on in your dream of love—revel in it! Let it be for me to teach you the taste of bitterness!"

Mrs. Dalrymple had kept her word. She had taken Lizzie to her own chamber, and the poor girl was grateful for her protection. Now that all was over, now that the eternal links were riveted and there was no escape, she felt to the full the agony that must come of the step she had taken. More than once in the long solitude of that sad night Mrs. Dalrymple had heard her praying to die.

The time had been when Mrs. Dalrymple would almost have perilled her soul to make happiness for her son, but she could not do it at the sacrifice of the fair girl who clung to her for sympathy and succour. While she believed that her son had no worse fault than too much daring, she would have helped him; but when she heard the interview that took place between him and Harperley, her faith was shaken, and she made a mental vow that until his innocence was proved, his fair young bride should not be given to him.

It was Paul Dalrymple's constant study to appear good and honourable in his mother's sight; and so, in deference to her will, he treated Lizzie with deferential courtesy, never urging his claim, nor making the most distant mention of the ceremony that had taken place. He bore himself with proud humility, and with something of a subdued sadness, that touched her in spite of her own sorrow. He knew that he must win his mother's confidence before he won Lizzie's love.

Had John Lenmore been an old friend instead of a hated rival, Paul could not have met him in a more genial manner. He went out to the hall and was the first to offer his hand.

"Ah, Lenmore!" he cried, joyfully, "I have heard so much of you that I am glad we meet at last, though my fear suggests that you have come to take a pleasure from us."

"Mr. Dacre desired me to come for Miss Amory," replied John, gravely. "Will you kindly tell her I am here?"

"Miss Amory is with my mother. I will send to her. May I ask you into this room?"

In the face of this genial reception, John felt that he was acting under prejudice in doubting the man, yet the instinct was so strong within him that he could not entirely dismiss his dignified manner.

He little thought while Paul talked to him of the weather, Thorpe-down, London, and a hundred ordinary topics, that the man who chatted so pleasantly was master of his heartstrings. Before they had been together half an hour, the charm of the half-Italian style began to have an effect even on him.

"A dangerous companion for Lizzie," John thought. "He would fascinate me if I had not such strong cause to doubt him."

#### CHAPTER XVII.

And if I helped you to your love-longing,  
Mesecoms some grain of love might fall my way,  
And love's god help me when I came to love;  
I have read tales of men that won their loves  
On some such wise. *Spenser.*

LEAVING his visitor in the well-appointed library, Paul went to tell Lizzie who had come. In his absence John Lenmore had ample time to look at the things that told him best what kind of man Mr. Dalrymple was, and he was clearly a man of cultivated taste. The pictures were fine old works, well chosen; the statuettes and bronzes chaste in subject, and of great intrinsic worth; the book-shelves were crammed, and there was not a worthless volume in the whole.

"A Sybarite and a student," thought John—"a man who, if not born rich, would get riches at any sacrifice; these internal evidences of character are never to be mistaken."

Paul went to Mrs. Dalrymple's boudoir and found her there alone. She saw by his face that something had happened.

"Mother," he said, in the intense tone peculiar to him when strongly moved, "John Lenmore is here. He has come to fetch Lizzie."

"Well, my son," was the calm reply; "Lizzie must go with him. It is better so."

He wrung his hands hard together in passionate pain.

"What if she should not come back?"

"Still I would say better so."

"And yet I love her so that I could not live without her," he said, and his pleading agony touched her. "I tell you, mother, that were I a criminal, steeped to the lips in sin, I should always worship her with firm and endless devotion! You will not keep her from me?"

"If you will promise that in future things shall go on as if last night had never been, she shall come back, and I will help you to win her; but think, Paul, how any act of rashness now might ruin all our hopes. Mr. Dacre would never forgive us if he knew what had happened. He would take Lizzie away for ever, and be our implacable enemy!"

"True—true!"

"Whereas, being sure that she can never be another's, you can afford to wait till we gain his consent; or as the time goes on, and I prove you are what I like to believe you are, we can arrange a plan. It would seem too sudden just now."

"How?"

"Hint to her gently that she can meet you as of old, with the same safety—the same confidence let her come many times, to give at least a colouring to the supposition that she has had opportunities to learn to love you."

"Then?"

"Win Lizzie to be willing, and then some day, while I go purposely on a visit to Mr. Dacre, you can take her away—to France, to Italy—anywhere to spend your honeymoon, and Lizzie shall leave a letter asking me to make her peace with her guardian, telling me that her mind has undergone a change, and that she loves you better than she ever loved John Lenmore. Do you like the plan?"

He kissed her gratefully.

"No one but my own mother would have thought of it."

"Long before you return Mr. Dacre will have grown reconciled; and meantime, before this takes place, you must not by word, or sign, or token give any one cause to suspect the tie there is between you."

"I will not."

"And will you be guided by me in what you do this morning—an act of grace that she will remember with gratitude—thinking with pleasure of your delicate thought for her, admiring the chivalry of your self-sacrifice."

"I will do what you wish in everything," he said, feeling in this that he wanted a counsellor. So long as his own soul was not troubled he could be cool and subtle, but his deep and fiery passion for Lizzie left him no control over heart or brain.

"Go to her, then, and tell her that John Lenmore is here; tell her, in words that you will best find when speaking, that if it is her wish you will give her up to him now and for ever."

"I can scarcely do that," he said, moodily; "she might take me at my word."

"There speaks man's little knowledge of a woman's heart. Persecute her with attentions, urge your claim, your power, as if it were a right, and it will be like a fetter to her—she will long to be free from it; but be tender, generous, chivalric, thinking nothing of your own pain, making any sacrifice for the sake of her happiness, and then the gentle pity that often makes woman fatal to herself will speak within her on your behalf. You have but to try."

"I will," he said, wringing her hand. "You judge of her by yourself, and when one woman does that of another she is rarely at fault."

"My proud, impetuous boy!" murmured the widow, as the fine grace of his figure left her sight. "He would be worthy of her, peerless as she is, if—"

Mrs. Dalrymple could not go beyond that dark suggestive if—the shadowy future of guilt was too terrible to contemplate.

Paul found Lizzie at the window of a little quiet room, where it was her wont to sit and read when she desired to be alone. Her face was averted, but he saw it in beautiful soft outline, white as Parian, and as the face of a tearless Niobe.

He approached with noiseless footstep, and spoke in a subdued voice:

"Lizzie!"

A slight, shivering start, and she turned towards him with a hopeless look of resignation—no smile.

"Well, Mr. Dalrymple," she said, in tones that sounded strange even to herself, as if they came from a breaking heart, or a heart that was broken.

"John Lenmore is here," he said, sadly. "He has come for you."

The flush of joy in her blue eyes went through him like a dagger. It was but a momentary flash; in the next instant her eyes were sadder than before.

"Lizzie," he said again, and this time he raised her from her seat, holding her hand gently and retaining it; "I am going to take you to him, and you are going away from me. Before you go I wish to speak to you."

She only inclined her head, signifying that she would listen to him.



"I have not been kind to you," he went on, in a tone of self-reproach. "Every fibre of my body is instinct with love for you, every sense of my soul thrills with intense love, and yet I give you pain. I ought to have spared you, sweet. I had no right to be selfish."

Lizzie wondered what was coming from this strange commencement, and her wondering increased as he continued:

"If I could unsway that fatal story I would do so, for I know you can but think of it with pain. It is too late now; but I ask you to forget it and rely upon me to always come between your brother and his peril. Nay, I can give you hope. I have reason to believe that Mr. Bryant, the man I told you of, is not dead, after all."

For the first time since she had heard the fearful narrative the blood went to her cheek, and she almost smiled.

"For the next," he said, lifting her hand to his lips, "if it will make you happy, I will ask you to look upon last night as though it had never been. I will never breathe our secret; it shall never trouble you. Deeply as I love you, it would destroy me to think that my ungenerous passion saddened your existence. When I take you to John Lenmore now, Lizzie, it shall, if you wish, be for ever. I will give you to him."

He had never looked so well in her eyes as at that moment, when his voice faltered and he stood before her with his head bowed in the generous humility and pride of self-abnegation.

"Only say," he said, recovering himself, "that before you do anything that may separate us eternally, you will take time for reflection. Think of me with a little more, for I do love you, Lizzie—my beautiful, fair queen!—and my love has never changed—never can change!"

He waited then for some recognition of his words. There was a look of pity in her eyes, but he could see that her thoughts were not with him. She could not think of him while John Lenmore was there.

"Let me take you down to him," he said, as if interpreting what was passing in her mind. "Remember, Lizzie, that I give you to him, my rival, in perfect faith. You will think of me; you will try to love me, and we shall not be strangers in the future. You will come to see me sometimes; say that you will."

In the last moment he knew that he had been unwise to force the question just then. He saw the error and sought its remedy.

"Come," he said, taking her hand and leading her towards the door with a bearing that implied his own banishment from her for ever if she wished it; "he is waiting."

And he was about to take her down, for she had not spoken, when Mrs. Dalrymple appeared. She wore a riding costume.

"Mr. Lenmore has come for Miss Amory," she said, as if the tidings were new to them; "and I am going to ride back with her. Will you order the horses, please."

Paul went to obey. He had more faith in his mother's discretion than in his own, under present circumstances, and he was certain in his own mind that she had been listening, so that she might appear at the proper moment.

He was not sorry that the scene was over. It had gone as far as he could go with anything like self-control.

He returned to John Lenmore, so quiet in face and manner, that not the keenest observer would have suspected his heart had so recently been torn by a tempest of passion.

"Mrs. Dalrymple will accompany you," he said. "They will not keep you waiting long."

Five minutes later the two ladies made their appearance. Paul, when taking leave, was on his guard. No sign betrayed to John Lenmore that the other had more than an ordinary interest in Lizzie.

"Why are you going with them?" Paul whispered to his mother, as he assisted her to her seat.

"To give her time. If they were alone, he would see that there was a strangeness about her."

"I did not think of that," he said; "but you are right."

When he stood on the steps watching the little party ride away, he could not suppress the jealous envy in his heart. John Lenmore and Lizzie had met very quietly. Both were too well bred to make their new engagement known to strangers, but when John took his place by her side on horseback, Paul saw the change in her. She was happier, in spite of her sorrow and her secret.

To say the truth, John Lenmore was disappointed at not having her to himself on the homeward ride. There was so much to say, and the months of his absence from her had grown like years to him; but he could say nothing till they reached the Lodge, and were alone.

Mr. Dacre, who welcomed Mrs. Dalrymple with a pleasure John was not prepared to see, was

thoughtful enough to take her out of the way, and leave the young people alone.

No sooner had the door closed than John took Lizzie in his arms. She was usually so calmly happy and self-possessed when she met him, that he wondered much when Lizzie trembled at his caresses, and, in answer to his first few gentle words, began to sob passionately.

"Are you not well?" he asked, tenderly. "I thought you were pale when I saw you first. What is it?"

"I did not think of seeing you so soon," said Lizzie, feeling bitterly the necessity of acting a falsehood to him; "and I was so very glad."

Very, very glad, indeed, she might have said with perfect truth; for, once away from Paul Dalrymple's dangerous presence, out of his power and sight, with John Lenmore, the old sense of tranquil confidence returned. He was so strong, and calm, and brave. Lizzie felt that he could protect her, no matter what might come.

She conquered her emotions soon and was quiet, in spite of the bitter pain at her heart. It was hard to stand there, in the arms of the true-hearted man, whose love for her was not greater than hers for him, and know that there was an eternal barrier between them.

He told her, as he always told her, how the time was coming nearer, and he would soon be prepared to ask Mr. Dacre for the fulfilment of his promise. John did not tell her what had passed at home. He tried to think that all would be well; he could not believe that Heaven would keep them separate now that he had toiled so well for her.

"We shall not be rich," he said; "and yet I would not change my future to be heir to a kingdom. Have you thought, Lizzie, of what you are about to do in leaving the luxury of this home to be the wife of a hardworking London barrister, who can only give you a little house and a modest income?"

Her large eloquent eyes turned upon him with a wistful look. She could have told him truthfully how gladly she would have gone with him if but to a cottage, so that they were together, where she could forget the man who had so strangely made himself master of her destiny.

She tried not to think of that. The thought was too bitter. More than once Lizzie was on the point of telling him everything and trusting to his strength and wisdom to rescue her; but for the sake of her brother Fred she kept her lips closed.

"May I tell you, sweet," said John, "that I do not care for you to visit the Dalrymples. The lady may be—and doubtless is—admirable, but I have a reason for thinking that he is not worthy to be even for a day the companion of a pure, good woman. You, I am sure, know that I do not say this out of any small sense of jealousy."

"What would he say," thought Lizzie, "if he knew all?"

"Six months from now," John went on, "and I can claim you altogether; and if you will permit me, Lizzie, I would ask you to let me choose your friends for you meanwhile. I want you to visit none but pure women and good men. Paul Dalrymple is not one of the latter."

"Why do you think so, John?"

"I have a reason, dear one, but I cannot tell it just now. I wish you would visit them."

"I will not, if you do not like me to do so," she said, giving the willing promise, and thinking at the same time what a cruel thing it was that she could not take him into her confidence. "I will do whatever you desire."

John Lenmore was quite content. Like all men who love strongly, he was grateful for the least concession, and John Lenmore's high, firm worship was a sort of idolatry. To him earth held no creature so beautiful; and he treasured every little involuntary act by which she showed her affection. The touch of her hand on his cheek, a caress given unasked, the sweet docility with which she subdued her proud spirit into gentleness, because she loved him—these things made her priceless in his sight.

Lizzie would have been more than happy in this meeting but for the one thought that embittered all. What would be the end of that fatal step from which, in spite of Paul Dalrymple's apparent generosity, she could not withdraw.

"My pet lamb is very thoughtful," said John, when she had looked at him with a long and earnest gaze, half resolving to tell him the whole truth—"why is it?"

"I have something to tell you, John," she said, sadly; "but I must not tell it yet."

"If you have anything to say," he suggested, taking her fair face between his hands; "you had better confide in me."

"But if I have been wrong?"

"My darling could do nothing that I could not forgive!"

"But if I have a secret—have been betrayed into error, into wickedness."

"There is nothing, my own, that I could not save you from. A sin you could not commit; an error the best and wisest of your sex may be tempted into. Tell me what it is, my darling, and I promise you that there is nothing you may have done from the consequences of which I cannot save you."

"But if I have not been true?"

He kissed her with a fond, incredulous smile.

"You are forgiven, no matter what it is; but you had better tell me. We, who love each other so truly, should have no secrets. The very essence of love is faith—true, entire confidence."

## CHAPTER XVIII

What is it that hath burned this heart?  
For thy speech flickers like a blown-out flame.  
*Atalanta in Calydon.*

Now that Lizzie was out of the way of Paul Dalrymple her secret was in danger; the calm, protective strength of John Lenmore gave her courage; there was the old sweet sense of safety.

John saw that she had something on her mind. The long, wistful look expressed her desire to make a revelation.

"You better tell me," he urged. "There is nothing that I cannot forgive, nothing that I cannot save you from. I am sure, Lizzie, that you have been true to me."

There was no reply. She could not, remembering what had passed, answer him as she would have answered him in the old days.

In spite of his strong faith, his deep and tender affection, a misgiving crept into his heart; some shadowy peril that, with a lover's keen instinct, he associated with Paul Dalrymple.

"You have been in trouble, sweet," he said; "you have some care. You are not the same happy girl who met me when I came down last. You were so glad then, so calm and happy."

"Have I changed, then, so very much?" she asked, with a sigh.

"Yes, you have changed. There is almost a haunted look in your eyes, as if you had a mystery to keep; there is a restraint in your manner. You love me, yet you shrink from me as if you dared not love me as you used."

At each sad word of his, her face grew sadder. What would he say if she told him the whole bitter truth?

In the pause that followed he began to think that, perhaps, she had heard of Fred. Paul Dalrymple might have told her something.

"Lizzie!" he said earnestly, "this change has come upon you recently, since you visited your friends at The Croft. It's cause is something that has happened there—something that you have done. It must be so."

There was a struggle going on within her soul; she longed to tell him all, and throw herself upon his mercy.

"You will not turn from me," she said, tremulously.

"Never!"

"Even if I had done you bitter wrong?"

"What wrong can you have done. You love me still."

"I never loved you so dearly. I never knew till now how dear you are to me."

"Then tell me," he urged once more. "Do not keep me in suspense; it is better to know the worst, than to endure the agony of doubt."

"It is such a terrible story," she said, trembling.

"It will break my heart to tell; yours to hear."

He drew her to his breast, laid her face upon his shoulder, and spoke to her kindly, caressingly; assuring her, that no matter what might be the nature of the mystery, his love would be the same.

Then she began to tell him; the secret was too much for her, and she had a faint hope that he would find the way to save her yet.

"Have you heard what happened in the colonies?" she asked, "to Fred and Mr. Bryant?"

"Yes. Have you heard it too?"

She answered in the affirmative.

"From whom?"

"From Mr. Dalrymple."

"And what did he tell you?"

"The truth!" and she shuddered as she said it.

"The story that you heard from Mr. Dacre is untrue from beginning to end."

"But let me hear what Mr. Dalrymple told you," he said, gravely; "though I can almost guess. Did he incriminate your brother?"

"Terribly!"

"To what extent?"

Lizzie nerved herself to the task with an effort, and in low, shuddering tones repeated what Paul Dalrymple had told her almost word for word. When she came to that portion which detailed how the unfortunate Mr. Bryant went to his fate, John Lenmore, strong as he was, turned very pale.

"There is a darker mystery in this than we can see at present. Fred may have been indiscreet, reckless, even to dishonour; but he would not be guilty of such a crime. If Mr. Dacre's steward died like that, it was Dalrymple, and not your brother, who slew him."

That thought had not suggested itself to Lizzie before. Now she saw with terror that she was linked, perhaps for her lifetime, to a man whose hand had taken a fellow-creature's life.

"But he has Fred in his power," she said. "He is a strange man; and John—he loves me!"

"Has he told you so?"

"Oh, yes."

"Forgetting that you were under his roof in the sacred character of guest. What motive had he, Lizzie, in telling you that fearful story of a crime in which he was at least an accomplice?"

"He promised to save Fred—to stand between him and his doom, the dreadful doom that would be his if Fred were captured."

"I see," said John Lenmore, very pale and very calm. "On what conditions did he offer to do this thing?"

"He took an oath before Heaven that if Fred were captured he would save him, even at the sacrifice of his own life, if—"

"If what?"

"If I would be his wife."

A powerful thrill ran through John Lenmore from head to foot. The very thought was sacrilege; that beautiful, fair girl, whom he loved so well, sacrificed to save her brother!

"It was well done," he said, so quietly that she could not tell how deeply he was moved. "You were in the house alone with him when this occurred?"

"Yes!"

John Lenmore inclined his head in slow reflection. His close constructive mind began to put the truth together.

"You were alone with him," he said again, "and in telling you that terrible story he worked upon your fears. He urged his passion at the same time; he frightened you, and then, by swearing to sacrifice himself, tried to win a promise that you would be his wife. It was so—was it not?"

Lizzie began to notice this, that for some few minutes he had used no endearing name to her; she was still in his arms, for she was clinging to him, and he could not put her away. But his manner had changed; he spoke now with an almost legal quietude and gravity of tone.

"And now," he said, "what answer did you make?"

Lizzie knelt before him, looked at him with beseeching eyes, and then bowed her head upon his knees.

"John," she sobbed, "don't send me from you, don't take your hand away; hold me to your heart, for mine is breaking. Forgive me, do forgive me,—I am married!"

He rose and reeled from her, as if she had stricken him with death; his face was the face of a statue; an embodiment of bitter, despairing agony. John Lenmore did not speak, he could only look at her as she crouched on the floor, her head buried in the cushion of the sofa, and her long black robes trailing round her.

On that one moment every thought of joy went out of his soul; the whole fair fabric of his future crumbled down—the dream was broken. The lovely wreck of his lost happiness lay at his feet.

He could not speak. His heart sunk like lead; the blow had fallen on him like a fate. Lizzie crept nearer to him, and took his hand. He did not help her to rise; only when he saw her upturned countenance, with her soft eyes full of pain, he said, very sadly: "My poor lost darling!"

"Take me to your heart," she pleaded; "don't let me feel that you have quite gone from me. I do love you, John, only you. Would to Heaven that you had been there to save me!"

He echoed that wish in passionate bitterness; he lifted her up and held her closely to him. In spite of the mighty agony, it was sweet to know that she loved him, and that, for a time at least, his rival could not take her from the refuge of his arms.

John Lenmore tried to be strong and calm for Lizzie's sake, and while realising to the full the extent of his own misery, he pitied her.

"How many are there in the secret of your marriage?" he asked; "and when did it take place?"

"Last night."

"Only last night! To think, perhaps, that at the very moment I was speeding down to Thorpehead you were being given irrevocably to another. Who were the witnesses?"

"Mrs. Dalrymple and a servant."

"I doubted that woman from the moment I saw her," he said, between his teeth. "She must have

been in the nefarious plot, and she shall answer for it in the time to come."

"She was most kind," said Lizzie, remembering with gratitude the somewhat tardy resumption of duty on Mrs. Dalrymple's part; "and since the moment that the ceremony ended she has watched me with the tenderest care. I think she was sorry things had gone so far."

"And Paul?"

"Is nobler than you think. Just now, when you came for me, he said that if I felt that I could not love him, he would give me up to you for ever, and never urge his claims. He has been very gentle and thoughtful since, never intruding himself upon me even for an instant."

"I see. When he knew that you had given him the power he could pretend to act generously and release you. It is mere subterfuge, my darling; done to work upon your feelings, teach you to think of him with gratitude, and so verge from gratitude to love. If you would be saved from him now, Lizzie, you must be guided entirely by me."

"In everything, I will."

"You do not love this man, Lizzie?"

He need scarcely have asked the question—her look reproached him for it. He pressed her hand.

"We shall have to go by dark and devious ways to seek the truth," he said; "though the story he has told you will help us to it. You may thank Heaven, as I do, that your marriage with him is but a ceremony, and you are not fettered body and soul to a criminal—for I suspect him to be one."

Lizzie shuddered at the thought.

"I will so pursue him," said John, his firm lips settling down into an expression of relentless purpose, "so hem him in with a weight of terrible evidence, that he shall be glad to resign you. And I will not stop there. What he has done—the peril he has placed you in—has made me his enemy to the bitter end. And the end shall be bitter to him."

Every slow, distinct word came from the heart of a man who, when once roused into action, never turned aside till the thing he had promised to do was accomplished.

"Mr. Dacre must not know what you have done," he went on, "nor must Mrs. Dalrymple suspect what you have told me. I have your promise that you will not go to The Croft again. You will keep it for your own sake?"

"And for yours, John."

"And for mine. Mr. Dalrymple is received here by your guardian?"

"Yes."

"That I will put a stop to. We must keep the wolf out of the fold at any sacrifice. One thing more, Lizzie—never go out alone. You sometimes ride out unattended; you will not do so in future?"

She promised to obey, knowing that he must have a reason for these precautions, though in her innocence she could not comprehend what it was.

"There is my brother Will," he said, "let him be your companion as much as possible. He will not amuse you with his eloquence, but he has a heart of gold, and is as faithful as a watch-dog. I shall instruct him to take care of you."

"You speak as if I were in danger," said Lizzie.

"What is there to fear?"

"This; that man has power to claim and take you away, no matter with whom or where you may be. By the law of England the husband is absolutely master of his wife, and so that he does not outrage her by dishonour and brutality, no one—father, brother, or mother—may interfere between them. If he met you in the road and were so inclined, he could force you to accompany him; if—and he may when he begins to find that he is being hunted down—if he were to come here and prove his claim he could take you away, and your guardian dare not protect you. A girl when she marries does not know what links and bondage she is making for herself."

"But if man loved truly he would use power kindly."

"Yes; but kindness is of itself cruelty when it gives him no place in his wife's heart. It is a more terrible thing than I can tell, or you imagine, to be fettered to a man of whom you tire, or he tires of you. You weary of him, perhaps, and every look of affection makes you sicken, every caress makes you shudder; and when he can no longer shut his eyes to the real state of your feelings, he becomes a savagely jealous, watchful, suspicious tyrant, whose sole pleasure is to keep you from others and make you wretched."

"And that fate might be mine," thought Lizzie; "may be yet. I feel already how soon and wretchedly I should weary of Paul Dalrymple."

"Let me ensure your safety," said John; "and you shall soon be free. You are of age; but if your guardian can prove that undue influences were used to induce you to marry, the ceremony will be set

aside—as it shall be, if we have to appeal to the House of Peers."

The human heart is very strange. Though Lizzie was glad to know that there was a chance of her release, she could not suppress a faint feeling of pity for the man who, whatever his faults, his sins even, worshipped her.

John Lenmore, knowing the worst, had quite recovered his self-possession. The worst was not quite so bad as he had feared.

The marriage was but a ceremony, and that set aside, Lizzie was still the same pure and beautiful girl who had been for years the bride of his promise.

"Yes," he said, reflectively "with Will to watch you, and your guardian to keep Paul Dalrymple away, you will be safe."

"But what of Fred," she asked? "Should the story that Mr. Dalrymple told me be true, and should he in his disappointment bring Fred to justice?—for I am sure he could do so and would, if we defied him."

"Leave that to me," he said. "The man would not in any case show your brother an atom of mercy. All that he has done, springs from a deep and fiery passion for you. All that he has said, has been said to help him on to gratify a most unholy desire."

"Then you do not think that Fred is guilty?"

"Of a crime?—no! Of a weakness, of desperate folly, perhaps—yes! But Paul Dalrymple is, I am sure, the prime mover, instigator and chief accomplice in the crime committed—if it has been committed."

"Then the story that he told me—"

"Was told to force you into compliance, to terrify you into sacrificing yourself for your brother's sake."

"But if Fred were captured and brought to England?"

"Do not fear. The safety of the one depends upon the safety of the other, and I could save your brother in spite of him."

The great fear had calmed down. The agony was not so deep; the danger, faced with his quiet power, did not appear so terrible.

(To be continued.)

PRICE OF MEAT A CENTURY AGO.—The following is an exact copy of a butcher's bill, dated June 6, 1762. The parties to the transaction lived at a village within five miles of Nottingham. Meat seems to have been sold at a degree of cheapness which is most astonishing to us at the present day. Fancy a neck of veal for 9d., and a breast of mutton for 6d.! It is almost enough to make the whole race of posterity of the present day wish they had been born a century earlier. The bill states the name of the person indebted, and then proceeds:—

	s. d.		s. d.
Breast of veal .....	0 8	Shoulder of mutton ..	0 10
Shoulder of mutton ..	0 6	Shoulder of mutton ..	0 6
Breast and neck of ..	0 8	Shoulder of mutton ..	0 8
mutton .....	1 0	Shoulder of mutton ..	1 0
Leak (leg) of mutton ..	1 3	Breast of mutton ..	0 6
Breast of veal .....	0 8	Leak (leg) of mutton ..	0 10
Neck (neck) of veal ..	0 8	Neck (neck) of veal ..	0 8
Breast of veal .....	0 7	Breast and neck ..	0 8
Line (loin) of veal ..	0 8	(neck) of veal .....	1 8
Lone (loin) of mutton ..	1 2	Leak (leg) of veal ..	0 8
Breast of veal .....	0 8	Neck (neck) of veal ..	0 6
Neck (neck) of mutton ..	0 5	Shoulder of veal .....	0 6
Breast of bif (beef) ..	1 0	Breast of veal .....	0 10
Shoulder of mutton ..	0 7	Breast of veal .....	1 2
Leak (leg) of mutton ..	0 8	Neck (neck) of veal ..	0 7
Quarter of mutton ..	1 6	Neck (neck) of veal ..	0 6

PEDESTRIAN EXPLORER IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.—At five minutes to one o'clock in the morning a gentleman recently left Darlington, accompanied by Wilson the guide, starting from Atkinson's Lake Hotel, Keswick, for a mountain excursion, which, for the ground covered and the rapidity with which it was executed, is without precedent in the chronicles of the English Lake district. Travelling by the way of Southwaite, they commenced, about two a.m., to ascend Scawell Pike, (3,268 feet)—the highest mountain in England—where they were greeted with an unwelcome snow-storm. Having regained the level road they worked their way through Langdale Head and Skar Fell, reaching the apex of the "Mighty Helvellyn" (3,118 feet), after which, via Vale of St. John, they attained the summit of Saddleback (2,847 feet). There was such a volume of mist on these mountains, that in scaling them they several times lost their way. Having returned to the base of Saddleback, they pursued their journey (amid weather so tempestuous that they were compelled, for a portion of the way, to go on their hands and knees) to the top of Skiddaw—3,058 feet. As corroborative evidence of their enterprise, they left on the summit of each height which they reached, a bottle containing a letter, on which was inscribed a request that it might be posted to the writer thereof by the next wayfarer who attained that elevation. They returned to the Lake Hotel at 7.45 p.m., having accomplished a feat never before achieved in the district.





## REGINALD WARNER.

## CHAPTER XI.

In a few minutes the detective and his prisoner, who, during the brief voyage, had maintained a stern, unyielding silence, landed at the Pont Royal, and ascending the stone steps from the river side, entered a four-wheeled cab which Derville hailed, and were driven to the private office of the Prefect of Police.

A sentry was at the door carelessly pacing to and fro. They were ushered into a small and plainly furnished room, wherein sat at a desk a keen-eyed man, whom the detective saluted respectfully. It was Pietri, the Prefect of Police.

"So you have brought the bird," said the keen-eyed man, looking up with a grim smile. "We'll cage him so securely that he won't take flight a second time. Well, fellow," he added, addressing himself to the prisoner, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"It is for me, sir," answered Vivian, haughtily and promptly, for his indignation brought to mind all the French he had ever learned; "it is for me, sir, to demand why you have ordered your fellow ruffian to arrest a British citizen, who has committed no offence, and bring him before you?"

Pietri raised his eyebrows in indignant astonishment.

The detective explained:

"You see, Monsieur Pietri, his little game is to pretend innocence and ignorance. He came that game on me in the park of St. Cloud, where I have arrested him—threatened us with the vengeance of the British ambassador, and all that sort of gammon."

"He has a mind," said the prefect, sternly, "to try to what extent of prison discipline his contumacy will subject him."

"You have not answered my question yet," said Vivian, sternly; "I demand to know why I am brought before you?"

The prefect took no sort of notice of the question, but continued to address himself to his subordinate.

"You will make a report of the capture in due form, Derville; and simply, for form's sake, you had better make a sworn deposition to his identity."

"Very good, sir," replied the detective.

The prefect scratched a few lines on a paper, which the detective signed.

Then the prefect said to Derville:

"You solemnly and truly swear that you identify

["SATISFY YOURSELVES THAT I AM NO FELON."]

the prisoner here present as Conrad Rivers, condemned to hard labour for life at Toulon, for the crime of burglary, followed by armed resistance to the officers of the law, he being the same criminal previously arrested by you for that offence, and handed over to the authorities for trial."

The detective bowed.

Vivian sprang to his feet.

"Here is villany and perjury!" he cried, "or else the most wonderful combination of circumstances the world ever heard of. I am a British subject. I never set foot in France till three days ago. I belong to an honourable English family. I demand to be confronted with Lord Grenville, the British ambassador, who has known me and my family from boyhood."

"I will confront you with yourself," said the prefect, with a sinister smile.

He took from his desk a photograph and showed it to the prisoner.

"Dare you deny that this is a photograph likeness of yourself?" he asked.

"Of course not," answered Vivian. "It is my likeness, but what of that?"

"Simply that the picture was taken in this office, in my presence, one year ago," replied the prefect.

"You have condemned yourself, Conrad; and I assure you that your persistent impudence will not secure you the most agreeable reception at Toulon."

Vivian Warner was utterly confounded. His head sank upon his breast.

"You hit him there, prefect," said the detective.

Suddenly a light flashed from Vivian's eye. He tore off his coat and vest and bared his shoulders.

"Look!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "If I am a convict, condemned to hard labour for life—of course I bear the stamp of guilt, the infamous T. F. upon my flesh. Satisfy yourselves that I am no branded felon."

The prefect rushed from his seat, and, together with Derville, examined the shoulders of the prisoner. There was no stain or blemish on their marble surface.

The prefect himself now aided the indignant young man to dress.

"Sir," said he, "you have completely cleared yourself, and I am overwhelmed with regret at what has taken place. But your recognition of the photograph I showed you is my justification. By a strange freak of nature, who sometimes duplicates her works, you bear, as you must admit yourself, a perfect resemblance to one of our most notorious criminals. It is the more wonderful, since, of course, there can be no relationship between you. Yet

this striking resemblance is not without a precedent, as the archives of our police and those of other countries attest. It is unfortunate, and I repeat that I deeply regret what has occurred. It remains to ascertain the extent of the injury done your reputation, and to repair it as far as possible. Derville, have you communicated the supposed character of this gentleman to any one?"

"To only two persons," replied the detective. "To Mr. Vane and Mr. Craven, English gentlemen, residing at the Grand Hotel."

"You will go with Mr. Warner to these gentlemen, then," said the prefect, "and explain the circumstances to them. I am glad that there has been no notoriety about the affair. You will also inform all the special agents who are on the lookout for the escaped convict that Mr. Vivian Warner, of Warner Hall, now domiciled in Paris, is all he professes to be."

"I insist, sir," said Vivian, "that you yourself go immediately to Lord Grenville, the British ambassador, and ask him what he knows of Reginald Warner and his son, Vivian."

"I am so well satisfied of your character, sir," said the prefect, "that if I call on his lordship, it will only be in compliance with your own request. I will also send you a certificate with my hand and seal, for you may possibly be troubled again by some officious agent. I trust, sir, you will forget what has passed."

"I cannot forget it," replied Vivian, "but I most certainly forgive it."

He shook hands with the prefect, and left the office in company with the detective.

"I hope you bear no malice against me," said Derville, as they seated themselves in a cab. "I only did my duty."

"I don't blame you," answered Vivian; "but I am exceedingly vexed and distressed that I have the same face as a convict, who is roaming the world at large."

"He won't be at large long, sir," said the detective. "We shall soon have him by the heels. But of course we shan't look for him in Paris. He will keep clear of this city."

"I should think so," said Vivian.

"And then again, sir, though you have the same features, your expression is totally different. Your air of nobility and frankness staggered me when I first spotted you. But Conrad is a consummate actor, and I thought he had learned to counterfeit injured innocence as well as he can counterfeit an autograph. But here we are at the Grand Hotel."

Mr. Vane was with his daughter in the private

parlour. Derville sent up his card and was instantly admitted.

"Mr. Vane," said the detective, bringing in Vivian, "allow me to restore to the society of his friends a gentleman whom I have involuntarily calumniated. He is not the person I took him for, but all he professes to be, and any man may be proud of his acquaintance. The prefect of police has ordered me to make this reparation."

Mr. Vane offered Vivian his hand, and, while the colour mounted to her cheeks, and her eye brightened with delight, Clara, too, extended hers. Warner gratefully responded to the prompt cordiality of his friends.

"I've got another apology to make," said the detective, "and I want Mr. Warner for one moment, and then I'll give him back to you."

Derville and Vivian sought out the Hon. Augustus Craven, and explained the mistake to him.

"All right," said Mr. Craven. "But do me the justice to believe that I never suspected you. What our friend, the detective, here said to your detriment went in at one ear and out at the other: I knew that you could not be Conrad the Convent."

"Sir," said Vivian, shaking hands with him, "I am very grateful for your good opinion, and shall be proud to count you among my friends. I hope we shall see much of each other. Suppose you spend the evening with me in the Vane's apartment. I can assure you a hearty welcome."

"I shall be delighted," answered the convict. "Bye, bye, Derville. Look sharp for Conrad. If you arrest him without letting me know of it, I must know the reason why. You can't tell how much interested I am in his capture. For my part, I think you are all a set of blunders, and that the real culprit looks no more like our friend here than I do."

With these words he went upstairs with Vivian, and the little party of four got along very pleasantly together, although the Hon. Augustus Craven proved so fascinating a companion that once or twice Vivian felt a little twinge of jealousy.

The evening closed, however, with a very happy incident, a note to Vivian from the British ambassador.

"My dear sir," he said, "Pietri has called on me and confidentially explained the singular mistake of which you were the victim, having previously communicated the same to the emperor. I have now the pleasure to inform you that the emperor has requested that I will present you to him to-morrow morning at the Tuileries. You will also receive an invitation to the imperial ball to be given in honour of the Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz. All's well that ends well. I congratulate you."

"Very truly yours, GRENVILLE." Probably no happier man than Vivian Warner laid his head upon his pillow that night in Paris.

## CHAPTER XII.

VIVIAN WARNER was presented at court, and it was noticed that the Emperor and Empress of the French paid him more than the brief attention usually accorded to their casual guests at a public reception. The beautiful Eugenie, still sweetly charming, though she had reached the age when lovely women abdicate the sovereignty of beauty, was kind enough to say that she had heard of his rescue of Miss Vane, and it satisfied her that the age of chivalry had not yet passed away.

When imperial lips utter such delicious flatteries, a man must be more than mortal not to be at least temporarily intoxicated by them.

Of course two hours afterwards, the empress's compliment to the young Englishman was all over Paris. The same evening the *Figaro* published it. Invitations to balls, soirées, and dinners fairly inundated Vivian's table, and had he chosen to take advantage of the tide, he might have floated on the top wave of fashion.

But he valued those things only as they enhanced his merit in the eyes of one woman—an untitled, artless, frank girl. He accepted very few of the invitations, and only then because Miss Vane urged him to go, that he might be able to tell her what passed in the aristocratic circle into which she could not penetrate without an effort she was too indifferent to make.

The young people were a good deal together, and Clara soon learned to know that her life's happiness had become dependent on another.

Yet it seemed to her, after a few days, that Vivian's attentions grew less marked, and his manner reserved and distant. Could it be that she had mistaken the frankness of a generous nature for a warmer feeling, and that she was no more to him than any attractive young girl would be to a gentleman of ordinary politeness? Might she not have staked her heart and lost the venture?

Were these doubts and fears the suggestions of a sensitive nature, the phantoms of an excited imagination, or had they a foundation in reality?

The truth is that Miss Vane was not morbidly

sensitive, and that the manner of Vivian did indeed grow cold. But the feeling that prompted it did infinite honour to his heart. He felt that he had no right to press his suit until he had made a confidant of his father and received his sanction. It was while awaiting Mr. Warner's answer to a long letter, in which the young lover had detailed the circumstances of his acquaintance with the Vane, their character and position, and his own feelings and hopes, that he had shown that reserve which had so troubled the beautiful girl he adored in secret.

The answer was delayed, and the long-continued silence of Mr. Warner seemed ominous, and gave his son many an anxious hour.

The reason was, that, immediately on receiving Vivian's letter, Mr. Reginald Warner had privately written to a friend in Paris, to make minute inquiries about the Vane. Warner's correspondent went about his task with the deliberation of a thorough business Englishman, and of course his operations did not tally with the impetuosity of a lover. The inquiries, however, proved satisfactory.

Then Mr. Warner's agent made a long, dry, detailed report to his principal, of which that gentleman only read the favourable summing up. He instantly sat down and wrote the following:

"MY DEAR SON,—I am overjoyed to learn that your affections are fixed upon a worthy object. You know that I am an advocate of early marriages; and I had been hoping that you would meet some fair one worthy of your love and name. I never intended to control your affections; I never thought of insisting on social rank as a condition to my assent. Character and worth I value more than title and wealth. I have learned from other sources than your own letter that you have chosen well. I dared not trust entirely to the representations of a youthful lover, though having entire confidence in your honesty. That you may prosper in your suit is my most ardent wish; also that your marriage takes place as soon as—but not before—you have completed your travels. Should Mr. Vane return to England, urge him, in my name, to honour Warner Hall with a visit. But for a respite, on account of my rheumatic troubles I would run over to the continent and join you. My physician, however, is inexorable, and I find myself a prisoner for some months to come. Heaven bless you, Vivian, and bestow on you all the blessings you deserve."

"Your affectionate father,

"REGINALD WARNER."

With this precious document in his possession, Vivian immediately sought out Mr. Vane. The young man was greatly embarrassed, and could only stammer out:

"A letter from my father, sir. Perhaps you would like to see it?"

Mr. Vane put on his spectacles, extended himself comfortably in an easy chair, and read the letter through with tantalising slowness. Then he gave it back to the young man, who was fidgeting in his seat, and said, dryly:

"Your father writes a very nice letter. It seems he consents to your paying your addresses to a certain young lady. He doesn't mention her name, and I can't think whom he alludes to. You must introduce me and my daughter to her. We shall be pleased to make her acquaintance. Both of us take quite an interest in you, Mr. Warner, I assure you."

Vivian was so terribly in earnest that he had not the slightest idea that Mr. Vane's ignorance was feigned, and that he was indulging in one of his quiet jokes.

"Is it possible, sir, that you have not suspected the motive of my attentions to your daughter; that—that—in a word—that I love Miss Vane, sir?"

"My daughter, Clara!" exclaimed the old gentleman, with well-feigned surprise. "A little girl just out of school! Nonsense! you must be joking!"

"My dear sir, I was never more serious in my life. From the first moment I saw Miss Vane I became interested in her; the interest has deepened into love; yet honour forbade me to speak out until I had obtained my father's consent. Yours is now necessary."

"What is that you say, sir?" cried Vane. "You're not making love to me. Speak to my daughter, sir. See what she says—she's in the next room."

"Then you permit me, sir—" cried Vivian, overjoyed.

"To make a fool of yourself!" interrupted the incorrigible eccentric. "Of course I do; the more fools there are in the world, the more fun for wise men like myself. Away with you."

Vivian found Clara in the next room, reading. She laid aside her book as he entered, and gently smiled a welcome to him. But her eyes were immediately cast down, not in sadness at meeting a cold, indifferent look, but because her heart told her that those brightened eyes, that radiant smile, that little blush—for Vivian did sometimes blush like a girl—betokened the crisis of her fate.

He stammered out something, and sat down beside her. Two young hearts were fluttering in unison. Somehow, her little white hand came in contact with his, and was detained an unresisting prisoner. She knew that Vivian was talking to her, though she could not exactly make out what he was saying; and no wonder, for his words were incoherent, and his utterance indistinct. But at last, too clear to be misunderstood, came the words:

"Clara, I love you. Will you be my own sweet wife?"

It was the old, old story—old as paradise, yet ever new and ever charming—the old blessed story of pure and happy love. Two more hearts were melted, that was all. Two more lives that had run in separate channels were at last harmoniously blended.

The fair girl's head drooped on the shoulder of her lover; gentle tears, as soft and refreshing as the dews of summer, relieved her overcharged heart, and the sweetest music that man ever listened to murmured consent in Vivian's ear.

There are some brief moments in life that give us a foretaste of heaven; or, rather, make a heaven of the earth—and this was one of them.

At last Vivian led Miss Vane to her father. The eccentric old gentleman tried hard to receive them with stoical indifference, but he broke down in the effort, and there were tears in his eyes as he blessed his daughter, and accepted Vivian as his future son-in-law.

"Clara and myself are going to drive to Sores, sir," said the young man; "and we shall be happy to have your company."

"I've a great mind to go," said Mr. Vane, "to punish you for that abominable perversion of fact. Get along with you, and don't let me see you till dinner time. And mind—don't keep me waiting; sharp six is the hour."

The drive to Sores and back was delightful, though, probably, neither of the lovers noticed a single object on the way, except a brilliant procession in the park, and that, of course, interested them.

What they said to each other would lose all its spirit in the repetition, and therefore we shall not assume the task of reporting it. It was a mutual confession of delicious secrets—of sentiments, hopes, plans—all bright, and rose-coloured, and sunny-hued. They were to go to Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, England, and there—ah! there—they were to be so happy.

There is nothing like love for feathering the wings of time, and they could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the sun nearing the horizon, and the obelisk of Luxor casting a long, dark shadow on the asphalt. It was nearly dinner time when they reached the Grand Hotel.

Vivian had become very intimate with the Hon. Augustus Craven, and that immaculate person was the very first he made acquainted with his happiness.

Craven congratulated him warmly and seriously; then he added:

"If I were a selfish person, I should regret your engagement."

"Why so?" asked Vivian.

"Because I had set my heart on travelling with you—and now I shall only be in the way."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow. You will be company for Mr. Vane."

"Gads! that's an idea," said Craven, eagerly. "Then you will allow me to join your party?"

"Proud and happy of your company."

"You flatter me. It's arranged, then. I shall be ready to start at a moment's notice."

They separated, and Vivian joined his affianced at the dinner-table.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE joyous anticipations of the lovers met with a sad check. A telegram from London announced that Mrs. Vane was seriously ill, and her husband decided on returning home immediately.

Fortunately this intelligence was received just on the eve of the departure from Havre of the "Ville de Paris," and Mr. Vane engaged passage for himself and daughter on that ship.

Vivian accompanied them to Havre, and took leave of them on board with a saddened heart. As soon as the ship got under way he hastened to the jetty, from which a last look is obtained of outgoing vessels. The channel is so near the jetty, that spoken words may pass between ship and shore, and as the steamer glided by his station Vivian was able to exchange a final adieu with his fair affianced. The signal gun of the noble ship as she passed the semaphore fell like a knell upon his ear. What long delays, what heart-rending sorrows might intervene before those severed hearts once more should be beating side by side! But Vivian confided his dearest treasure to the keeping of a kind Providence.

Then he hurried to the railroad station and took the express train for Paris.



During the twelve days which elapsed before he heard from the travellers, Craven proved an invaluable companion, cheering up the young Englishman by his constant attentions and inexhaustible gaiety.

At last came a welcome telegram. The Vane had reached London, after a pleasant passage, and Mrs. Vane was out of all danger. Once more the future beamed on Vivian with that radiant glory which gilds the visions of romantic youth. He decided to hurry through Belgium, up the Rhine, through Switzerland, and make a flying visit to Italy, just to say that he had seen the places pointed out in his father's itinerary, and then to hasten to London as fast as the fastest steamer could convey him. He only waited till he had received a letter from Miss Vane, and one came in the due course of post.

It was the first she had written him, and in half an hour its modest and tender words were indelibly engraven on his memory. Yet that did not prevent his reading it twenty times, each time rendering it more illegible from the kisses bestowed upon his dainty page.

With this treasure close to his heart, he started one fine morning for Brussels, in company with Craven. The latter, by the way, had held very little communication with his father, Ralph Warner (alias Grammont, alias Rivers), and kept his plans, whatever they were, entirely to himself.

Vivian congratulated himself on having secured so pleasant and valuable a travelling companion; one acquainted with Europe, and speaking its languages fluently, little dreaming the danger of such a companionship.

Brussels and Waterloo, Cologne and its cathedral, the legendary Rhine, the mountains and lakes of Switzerland, passed before their eyes like the pictures of a moving panorama. Then they entered sunny Italy, and one fine day found themselves established in Naples, in apartments which commanded a view of the peerless bay, with the smoke-crowned Vesuvius dominating the unrivalled scene.

Their brief stay in Naples was like a delightful dream, every hour being occupied by some interesting sight; a visit to the volcano, one to the buried cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and one to the blue grotto of Capri, were particularly noteworthy.

One evening Vivian and his friend accepted an invitation to a *cene*, given by a noble Italian lady, where they met the representatives of the most brilliant society in Naples. Among those to whom they were presented, was a certain Count Fialto, of Milan, a gray-haired gentleman, singularly handsome and fascinating in his manner, who showed them marked attention, particularly distinguishing Vivian.

He was, like Vivian and Craven, a stranger in the city, and this was his first appearance in society; but his self-possession and conversational talents made him perfectly at home.

A little group, which included Warner, Craven, and the count, were seated at a table covered with engravings and photographs.

The conversation turned upon brigands, and Vivian asked the count if the mountainous regions near the sea-coast were still haunted by these pests of society.

"There are still lurking in our mountain passes, sir," said the count, "a few desperadoes; but the system is breaking up, if not already destroyed. There are now no longer large organised bands, skilfully combined, with affiliations among the peasants, and friends and spies in the cities, as there used to be. The papal troops and those of his Majesty Victor Emmanuel have decimated and daunted these rogues. There is not more than one authentic outrage for a hundred reported. Nay, I am sometimes inclined to think that brigands are improvised, and attacks on travellers got up on speculation, to enhance the fees of guards and guides and postillions, from grateful and timid tourists."

"Yet the other day," said an English artist, "a railroad train was stopped by them not twenty miles from Naples."

The count shrugged his shoulders incredulously. "And," persisted the artist, "when you say that the regular organisations of robbers are broken up, what do you say to the stories of Matteo Orsini and his band?"

"That they are stories," replied the count. "My private opinion is that Matteo Orsini is a mythic personage. Who has seen him?"

"I have," answered the artist.

"You have seen Matteo Orsini face to face?" cried the count, fixing his eyes on the painter.

"What manner of man was he? A sort of Cyclops, I suppose, with one eye in the middle of his forehead."

There was a general laugh at the expense of the young artist.

"Not at all, sir," replied the latter, nettled at the count's incredulity. "Four of us were stopped

near Fondi by this miscreant, and rifled of what little money we had about us."

"These fellows generally carry off their prisoners, so it is said," said the count, carelessly, "and hold them to ransom, writing to their friends for a fixed sum of money to redeem them."

"A party of travelling painters are not likely to prove a valuable capture," said the artist, "and so this fellow allowed us to go on our way penniless. The leader wore a mask."

"Ah! he was masked," said the count.

"Yes, sir; but when he was at some distance from us, he turned and said to me in a tone of bravado: 'Young man, you can tell your friends that you have been halted by Matteo Orsini; and you can also tell them that he is not the hideous-looking fellow that he has been represented to be.' With that he raised his mask, and gave me a momentary glimpse of his features before he disappeared among the bushes. I immediately made a sketch of him, and here it is!"

He handed his sketch-book to the count.

"Not a bad-looking fellow!" cried the count.

"Quite a *Fra Diavolo*!"

And the sketch was passed round among the ladies, all of whom pronounced the brigand a very handsome man.

While the party were engaged with the drawing, the count left the little group and sauntered out into the spacious garden attached to the palace, into which the drawing-room opened. Doubtless he felt the need of fresh air.

After a moment, Craven, who alone had noticed his disappearance, followed him, and found him sitting on a marble bench, idly watching the falling spray of an illuminated fountain.

"I trust I am not intrusive," said Craven. "You may wish to be alone."

"Not at all, my dear sir," replied Fialto, affably making room on the seat beside him. "Sit down here, you will find the air refreshing after the suffocating atmosphere of that crowded drawing-room. Then, again, this glimpse of nature is reviving. I love flowers and trees."

"I thought you might prefer something wilder—mountain scenery, perhaps," said Craven.

"Who says that I do not?" replied the count.

"I do love mountain scenery."

"The wild heights of the Abruzzi, perhaps."

"As you say—the Apennines, the Alps, the wild Calabrian mountains."

"I wonder you ever left the mountains," said Craven. "I should think the atmosphere of Naples was dangerous to you."

The count started slightly, and eyed his questioner keenly.

"I live in Milan, sir," he said, coldly.

"And I say you live in the mountains," replied Craven.

The black eyes of the count flashed flame, and instinctively he put his hand in his breast-pocket.

"What am I to understand by that remark?" he asked, sternly.

"That your fellow-leaguer, Conrad Rivers, wonders why you venture to show yourself under an assumed name and title in Naples, Matteo Orsini!"

Orsini looked at the speaker, but could not identify him.

A stiletto instantly flashed in his hand, but Conrad, who was prepared for the movement, seized his wrist, and whispered in his ear the pass-word of the League.

"You, Rivers! At first I took your companion to be you; the likeness is surprising—only the expression is different. But your disguise is perfect," said the brigand, for such he was, eyeing his companion with undisguised admiration.

"It needs be," replied Conrad, "when I went to Paris after my escape, where I was perfectly known, and where I had to confront the very officials who arrested me. But how is it I find you in Naples without disguise?"

"Because I am unknown here," replied Orsini.

"Yet the artist said that you stopped him."

"True."

"And that you lifted your mask and disclosed your face?"

"I lifted my mask, but did not disclose my face, my good fellow."

"How is that?"

"Under my black gauze mask I wore another of wax, so exquisitely modelled, so nicely coloured and fixed, that at a little distance you could not tell it from a living face. It was those artificial features that the artist sketched and exhibited as mine. The act which he thought bravado was a deep design. The artist's sketch has been photographed, is in the possession of the Neapolitan and Roman police, has been lithographed, and now figures on posters, coupled with a reward of ten thousand crowns for the capture of your humble servant, living or dead."

"An ingenious device," said Conrad. "What are you doing in Naples?"

"Picking up information about the wealth and

movements of travellers. I dislike trusting to agents."

"And what you said this evening about the decrease of brigandage—"

"Was to gull fools. No; we were never better organised or stronger than we are at present. We had a skirmish the week before last across the frontiers with the papal dragoons, and we sent them back faster and fewer than they came to the Eternal City. They were foreign recruits and fought in earnest—your Italian regulars never harm us. We have an understanding with the men and even the officers. Now what are you about?"

Of course this conversation was carried on in low tones, and after both the men had satisfied themselves that there were no eavesdroppers.

"I am travelling companion to the rich Englishman you saw me with this evening and mistook for me. The likeness is indeed wonderful," answered the convict.

"Has he missed any money yet?" inquired the brigand, with a smile.

"Not a penny or a shilling's worth of jewellery."

"He has a very handsome diamond breastpin."

"Yes—it is genuine. It would be a nice addition to your pretty daughter, Zerlina's jewellery."

"When shall she have it?"

"Not yet awhile."

"I should be happy to see you one way," said the brigand.

"May I bring a friend with me?" asked the convict, with marked emphasis.

"Your friend shall be more welcome than yourself," replied the brigand.

"Then perhaps you may expect us within a week. I know your haunts."

"I shall be on the look-out for you myself," said the brigand.

"Don't be surprised," said the convict, "if my friend and I salute you with a discharge of firearms."

"*Diavolo!*" cried the bandit. "Then we shall reply in the same language."

"Yes, with blank cartridges," said the convict.

"Aha! I begin to see your drift. But if you have soldiers with you?"

"You may shoot them, and welcome. But be careful how you throw your lead in our direction."

"Never fear me."

"When you have captured us after a desperate resistance," said the convict, smiling, "I'll tell you more fully into my plans, and you shall have no reason to regret aiding them. I have come a long way to secure your co-operation. And now, Count Fialto, let us return to the ladies."

"With all my heart, Mr. Craven," replied the bandit.

The two gentlemen returned to the drawing-room.

As they went hence to the hotel, Vivian said:

"Do you know that I am delighted with that Count Fialto, Craven?"

"He's the finest fellow in the world," said Craven, with enthusiasm.

(To be continued.)

At the fortnightly meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir R. Murchison referred to the present position of Dr. Livingstone, and the success which is to be sent to him. He said—There have been great misapprehensions about this affair, and I have received numerous applications from active young men anxious to go in search of Dr. Livingstone, supposing that there was a real expedition about to start from this country or elsewhere. There is no such expedition even in imagination, and certainly none in reality, contemplated in any way. Dr. Livingstone has been three years and a half and more in the heart of Africa without a single European attendant. I am not sure that the sight of a young gentleman sent out from England who was not acclimatised would not produce a very bad effect, instead of a good one, upon my friend, the doctor; because he would have to take care of the new arrival, who would very soon die there, and the poor doctor would have an additional load. I have therefore to announce that there is no such intention whatever. I have received a dozen letters from admirable young volunteers who are anxious to distinguish themselves, but who have not the least idea of what they are about. I have every reason to believe that the 1,000,000 that the Government have given will go out by the consul of Zanzibar, who happens accidentally to be in this country, and who is going out immediately. He will instruct Dr. Kirk, the vice-consul, to send the same expedition which was started before, but which was impeded by an attack of cholera. The cholera has passed away entirely, the country is free from Zanzibar, and the only difficulty now is to get to Ujiji, where my dear and valued friend was, and still is, for he cannot move forward or backward without carriers, supplies, and so forth. It

will take two months or more for those supplies to go from the seaboard to Uji, and therefore you must put aside all anxiety for some months to come. I hope that about seven or eight months hence you will have good news, and that very soon after that we shall see our friend again in his native country.

## LADY BARBARA.

### CHAPTER IX.

THE private apartments of the Lady Barbara were situated in a corridor which ran parallel to the main hall, and which was connected with the latter by a narrow passage.

Lord Champney paced along this passage, directing his steps to the boudoir of his wife.

Involuntarily he moved towards the connecting doors, but as abruptly halted, almost at the threshold.

For the Lady Barbara's tears were falling on the object now, which Lord Champney recognised as a small, encased photograph.

Unconscious of the fiercely blazing eyes fixed upon her, the lady pressed the picture to her lips with a passionate tenderness that went to her husband's heart, and then thrust it in her bosom, as if that were its habitual resting-place.

Lord Champney gave utterance to a sharp, quick hiss, that rustled through the room like the warning of a startled and infuriated serpent!

The Lady Barbara sprang up in affright. At the same moment her eyes met the burning gaze of her husband.

In an instant she had grown deadly pale.

"Now, let us understand each other, madam," said her husband, waving the bouquet he held after an imperious fashion. "I have not come here to see you out of any impulse of affection. That, thank the fates, is all dead between us."

"Dead!"

"Yes. Did you think my love had survived all these years?" cried Lord Champney, with a sneer. "It is true I did romance a little the day I came here, but you interpreted my words at the time at their true value. So far from loving you, Lady Champney, so far from being the inconsolable victim of your cruelty, I should reject any overtures from you, should you choose to humble yourself to me. I do not desire even a friendship with you. I care nothing whatever for you. But, understand me, I do care for my honour, and I will defend it against all the world."

"A very laudable resolve," said the Lady Barbara, coldly. "Did you intrude here merely to say that?"

Lord Champney's cheeks flushed with a sullen red.

"That and more," he said, darkly.

"Ah," said the baroness, coolly. "Your manner grows theatrical. It's a pity you were born rich, my lord. The stage would have had a bright ornament if you had gone upon it! But if I may be allowed to ask, why waste this scene upon me? What have I to do with your resolves?"

"Your affection of ignorance is hardly natural!" ejaculated Lord Champney. "I am your guardian, madam, and I intend to see that you do not disgrace me."

"Disgrace you?" cried the Lady Barbara, with the air of an insulted queen.

"Those were the words I used, madam. I came in here to see you concerning another matter, and arrived just in time to witness the highly edifying spectacle you presented while weeping over and kissing the likeness of some villain—the very likeness that lies next your heart at this moment, madam. As your husband and guardian, I demand to see that picture."

The bright scarlet rushed in quick waves into the Lady Barbara's cheeks, like waves of blood upon snow. She put her hands against her breast, as if to defend herself against assault.

"You demand an impossibility," she said, huskily. "You refuse to show me that picture then? You defy me?"

"Yes," said the Lady Barbara, in a low voice. "Do you know what this refusal proclaims you? Do you understand what it makes you henceforward in my sight?"

The wife was silent.

"I can forgive you for hating me," continued his lordship, his eyes glowing like beacon fires, "but I cannot forgive this falseness, this treachery. Show me that picture, or from this moment I shall regard you, in my own mind, as a lost and abandoned creature!"

The Lady Barbara had seemed to hesitate, as if she were tempted to yield to his demand. But now her outraged pride rose like a bulwark between her and her husband.

"You utterly decline to show me the picture?"

demanded Champney, resting one arm and the bouquet upon the end of the piano.

"Utterly!"

"This secret, then, is another gulf between us!" he said, sternly. "I have nothing more to say on the subject. But a reconciliation between us is impossible until you come to me in wifely humility and place that picture in my hands!"

The Lady Barbara laughed scornfully.

"Then we shall never be reconciled!" she said.

"So be it. And now to come to the object of my visit. I am the bearer of a bouquet—"

His wife turned her head slowly.

"You meant it for me?" she asked.

In spite of her anger and pride, a sudden light and warmth glowed in her rare violet eyes. She fancied that her husband had intended the flowers for a peace-offering.

"They were for you," replied his lordship.

"Then give them to me, Sidney," said the Lady Barbara, more kindly. "How lovely they are! You remembered how fond I am of flowers?"

Without a word Lord Champney crossed the floor, and laid the bouquet in her lap. Then he stood near her, leaning against the mantelpiece, and watching her with a curious smile.

The lady toyed with the lovely blossoms, which had begun already to droop under the rough treatment they had received at the hands of his lordship. And, after a little, she perceived, as her husband had done, the tiny note hidden, like a serpent, among the flowers!

She started, and looked up in wonder and a sudden apprehension.

"Take it out!" said Lord Champney, sternly.

She obeyed.

"Read it!" commanded his lordship.

There was no address on the note. It was sealed with white wax, and was in its outward looks as dainty as the receptacle in which her ladyship had found it.

With trembling fingers the Lady Barbara tore open the missive.

It contained a closely written page.

The lady started back, recoiling as if the letter had contained a serpent.

"Well?" said his lordship, coolly.

"I—I recognise the handwriting!" murmured the wife, faintly.

"Of course you do!" sneered the baron. "I supposed you would. But go on. Read the letter."

"I cannot! I will not!" cried the Lady Barbara, crumpling the missive between her fingers.

"I insist upon it. If you refuse you will only more fully confirm my convictions. You know the handwriting, and it would appear that you know the contents of the letter before having read it. That argues a state of rapport between you and the writer. Are you afraid that I shall want to read the letter? If you do not read it, I will."

Terrified by this threat, the Lady Barbara unfolded the letter and read it, the words dancing strangely on the tinted page, as if they had been so many mocking, live things.

When she had finished its perusal, her cheeks whitening strangely, Lord Champney said:

"You have read it, then? Shall I read it also?"

The wife shook her head.

"Barbara," said his lordship, bending nearer to her in a sorrowful sternness, "if you are innocent of downright falsity and wrong-doing, you will place that letter in my hands! If any one has insulted you in that letter I will avenge your wrongs! If any one has written to you in pursuance of what is called a 'flirtation,' having presumed upon your recent unprotected condition, I shall pardon you and punish him. Barbara!" and his voice rose passionately, "if you are innocent, show me that letter!"

"I cannot!"

The dastardly writer—as if with a view, one might imagine, to this very scene—had begun by addressing her in the fondest words of love, and had thanked her for the encouragement she had given him, expressed his gratitude at having learned that she returned his ardent affection, and had begged her to meet him at a certain spot near the sea, on her own grounds, "where we met the last time;" and concluded by assuring her that he had heard of her husband's return, but that the writer would continue to elude or quiet any suspicious Lord Champney might entertain of the actual state of affairs. To this precious document was appended the name of Albert Effingham.

The Lady Barbara, familiar as she had been with many of the dissolute colonel's proceedings, was utterly amazed at the unparalleled audacity and falsity of this missive.

But all her anger, annoyance, and righteous indignation were swallowed up in her great fear lest, after all, it should fall into her husband's hands.

This Colonel Effingham was an egregious cox-

comb, vain, heartless, and unprincipled. He had been formerly a devoted admirer of the Lady Barbara, but her marriage and his own had come between them for many years. His wife's death and the Lady Barbara's loneliness and unprotected condition had at last turned his thoughts back to her, and, as she had said, he had annoyed her greatly by sending her flowers and letters, and in haunting at times her grounds, so that she could not go out for a stroll without meeting him.

And finally he had added to his persecutions this crowning infamy.

To exhibit the letter to Lord Champney would be but to precipitate some terrible calamity, to arouse a scandal, and to cause all England to ring with her husband's name and her own. For the Lady Barbara knew that these false words would be to her husband's fiery spirit like a flaming brand thrown into the midst of gunpowder.

In the face of that letter, she knew that any protestations of her innocence would be laughed to scorn.

To refuse to show the treacherous document would be scarcely better.

What should she do?

A tumult raged in her soul. Her brain seemed on fire. Her heart beat thickly, with muffled pulsations. "Well?" said Lord Champney, grimly. "Will you give me the letter?"

"Sidney," his wife whispered, clutching the letter closely, a strange dizziness seising her; "suppose it was a love-letter. Suppose it alluded to former letters, and to—meetings! Suppose it made me seem false to you, and yet I should declare the letter a base fabrication, would you believe me?"

"No!" thundered the husband, beside himself with passion. "No man would write such a letter to a pure and modest woman! No man would make such assertions in a letter to a woman unless they were true! Are there such statements in that letter?"

The Lady Barbara forced a quivering smile.

"That question to me?" she asked, trying to speak haughtily. "I was putting a case to you. Have I fallen so low in your estimation that you could suspect me of receiving such letters as the one I described?"

"No, you have not yet."

"Then I never shall!" cried her ladyship, arousing herself, and looking up at him strangely.

Before he could speak, or hinder her, she deliberately tore the letter into a hundred fragments, and tossed them out of the window.

The vagrant breeze caught them up, whirled them into an out-going current of air, and they were carried out seaward.

The Lady Barbara tossed the bouquet after them, and then sank back into her seat.

"What am I to understand from that strange movement?" demanded Lord Champney, fiercely.

"Simply that I decline to make a confidant of you, my lord!"

"I am to think the worst, then?"

"You are to think what you please!"

"At least, tell me who wrote that letter?"

"Never! The secret is mine, and I shall keep it!"

Lord Champney smothered an imprecation. His eyes blazed luridly.

He bowed deeply and went out.

The Lady Barbara tottered to the door, locked it, and fell fainting on the floor.

### CHAPTER X.

THE compartment in which Dora and Mrs. Narr had taken their seats in the express train had no occupants but themselves.

Dora sank into a corner seat, turned her face away from her companion, who was regarding her too closely, and gave herself up to her grief.

"You seem to take it awful hard that you have to go away with your own mother!" she said. "Of course, I ain't as good as them Chessoms. I ain't got no fine house, no troop of servants, no carriages, and heaps of money. But, inferior as I am, I wouldn't turn out a girl as had been made so much of in the family, just to save paying her mother a little annuity! These fine folks are mean, after all!"

Dora looked pained, but made no answer.

"This is a pretty how d'ye do altogether!" continued Mrs. Narr, discontentedly. "What sent the oldquire off so sudden I can't see. And he as healthy to look at as any butcher! He pretended to think so much of you too, but fine words won't butter no pa'snips, as I've heard. And he never left you even a penny to pay mourning, but just left you to be turned out to earn your own living—you that he made so much fuss over! If them's the ways of great folks, I've had enough of 'em!"

"Papa meant to provide for me," replied Dora, in a pained voice. "Please say nothing about him. You can never know as I know how good and generous he was."



"Papa! I should think that name had best be left out, since he left you so poor!" cried Mrs. Narr. "He showed his affection, didn't he? 'Good and generous!' Yes, to his own. When I heard that he was dead, I supposed of course he'd left you an heiress. But it's the way of the world. I told young Mr. Chessom yesterday that you were free to stay at the Grange, if he'd give me a hundred a year, but he didn't want you to stay. He said he was going to be married one of these days, and he thought you had better go away with your own mother. That's what your fine 'brother' thinks of you!"

"You do not seem pleased to have me with you," observed Dora.

"Well, I'm not," confessed Mrs. Narr. "I'd rather have had the annuity, that's a fact. You've got your fine-lady ways, and I've got my own notions, and I'm afraid we ain't going to get along together first rate. What are you going to do?"

"I shall become a daily governess. Mr. Chessom has given me an address where we can find lodgings, and also the address of the lady whom he expects to marry, and who will find me pupils."

"He's generous! He told me he gave you a hundred and fifty pounds, too. Where is it?"

"In my pocket-book."

"Give it to me, I'm your mother, and the proper person to take charge of it."

"No," said Dora, firmly. "I shall retain the money in my own hands. The duty of providing for us both falls upon me, and it is necessary that I should be purse-bearer."

"You are under age, miss!" she ejaculated. "I can take you before a magistrate and compel you to give up that money to me!"

"What do you want with it?" asked Dora.

"Why, to use. To pay our way, and so on."

"Well, I'll do all that."

"We'll see what the magistrate has to say on the subject!" cried Mrs. Narr. "You'll be taught your place, miss!"

Dora faced the woman squarely, her pale little face glowing determined and resolute.

"Let us settle this matter between ourselves," she said calmly. "It will not be necessary for us to go before a magistrate, I think, Mrs. Narr—"

"Mrs. Narr! Why don't you call me mother?"

"Because I do not feel that you are my mother," answered Dora. "I shall never feel a daughter's affection for you. I think it just as likely that I am your nurse-child, of whom you told me last week, as that I am your own child. Papa said the same. Indeed, it may be that your own child died, and that I was kept by you for some reason, which as yet I cannot guess. If you go before a magistrate, I will mention these suspicions of mine to him—"

Mrs. Narr gave a quick gasp. Her face changed colour, and a wild look glared out of her eyes.

"What an idea!" she muttered. "It ain't so. I can prove it. His lordship buried his own baby in his vault!"

"His lordship! Who is he?"

The woman leered cunningly.

"He was the father of my nurse-child!" she answered. "Never mind his name. About this money, Dora. You can keep it, since you're set on doing so. I've no wish to anger you. We will be friends; but don't you think you can call me mother?"

"No; but it isn't necessary."

"But you'll have to call yourself Dora Narr!"

"No. I shall keep the name of Chessom. It was the gift to me of dear papa, and I shall not give it up!"

Mrs. Narr growled discontentedly, but did not venture a remonstrance. Dora was too spirited for her to manage, and Dora's remark concerning the nurse-child had thoroughly cowed her.

Dora returned to her out-crowd from the window, and Mrs. Narr lapsed into silence, and finally into drowsiness.

Who shall speak the unutterable sadness of Dora's thoughts during the weary hours of that memorable journey?

But the journey at last drew to its end. Mrs. Narr awakened as the train steamed into the London Bridge station, and was the first to step out upon the platform when the guard unlocked the door.

A cab was selected, the cabman dispatched in quest of Dora's luggage, and Mrs. Narr and Dora entered the vehicle.

"Where are we going?" asked the woman, anxiously, as the cabman came marching up with the trunks. "I hope you haven't lost the address!"

"No; here it is," said Dora, taking the card from her pocket-book. "No. 6, Lowater Crescent, Notting Hill."

She repeated the address to the cabman, who mounted, and they were soon bowling out of the station, and moving slowly in the direction of the Strand.

It seemed a long ride through the hot sun to Notting Hill, but that suburb was gained at last, and Lowater Crescent sought out and discovered.

The cab stopped before the number designated, and the cabman ascended the high steps and sounded the knocker.

Dora and Mrs. Narr then alighted, just as a servant came to the door.

Dismissing the cabman, after he had brought in the trunks, the two went into the dwelling, and were ushered into a dreary little parlour, where they were joined by the landlady.

To this personage, Mrs. Gaston, a short, plump, red-faced little woman, with a bustling manner, Dora delivered one of the two letters which Edmund Chessom had sent up to her room just previous to her departure from the Grange.

"Ah, from Mr. Chessom!" said the woman, glancing at the signature. "He asks me to find lodgings for the bearer and her companion. How very fortunate! My second floor, the same Mr. Chessom had last year when he was here, happens to be vacant."

Mrs. Narr then offered to assist the stout serving-woman to bring up the trunks from the narrow entry below, and this operation was soon effected, the trunks being carried into Dora's private room.

"I'll send you up a cup of tea, Miss Chessom," said the landlady; "for you do look tired out. Your cheeks are as white as a cloth. And I'll show Mrs. Narr the best shops in the neighbourhood, so that you can commence purchasing necessary articles at once."

Dora thanked Mrs. Gaston in a way that won the plump little woman's heart, and she hurried away, intent on preparing a little meal for her new lodger.

Dora untied her hat and sat down on the sofa.

Dora was alone when Mrs. Gaston came up with a little pot of tea and a plate of toast.

"I don't think I feel hungry," she said, lifting her heavy eyes, and trying to smile.

"You look downright ill, Miss Chessom," exclaimed the landlady, setting down her tray. "Do try and drink a little of the tea—that's a dear."

Thus urged, Dora sipped the tea, but the weary headache and heartache were beyond such simple prescriptions, and Mrs. Gaston at length retired, fully persuaded that her young lodger was "in a decline."

About an hour later, as Dora was nestling on the sofa, nearly distracted with the strange street noises, Mrs. Narr came awagging in, her black bonnet bent all awry, her arms filled with purchases, and her face flushed almost to a purple colour.

"Well, I'm back!" she panted, thickly, dropping into the nearest chair, and tumbling her parcels upon the table. "I spent the money to good advantage, and it's all gone! There's butter and cheese and bacon and so on, and I left an order at the ale-house round the corner; not feeling very well, I got a little spirits, which they say is good at such times."

She exhibited a black bottle, drawing it from under her shawl, with a maudlin smile of triumph.

Dora was at once disgusted and terrified.

"Do you drink?" she asked, sitting up.

"Don't I," demanded Mrs. Narr, with a leer, putting the bottle to her lips. "I ain't a habitual drinker, dear, I scorn such vices. But I'm subject to them turns as require to warm up the stomach—spazzums and such!"

Even in her disgust, Dora remarked that Mrs. Narr's language had suffered the same deterioration as her appearance under the influence of liquor.

"Wish he was here," said the woman, meditatively, after a pause.

"Who?"

"Jack, of course—Jack Narr, your pa."

"He is dead!" said Dora. "You said he died in America."

"Yes, so I did," exclaimed Mrs. Narr, with a cunning wink. "But I only said that to gain help and sympathy. Besides, Jack was a forger, and somebody might be looking for him, even after all these years. Well to be on the safe side."

Dora thrilled with a sudden fear.

"Isn't he dead?" she demanded.

"No more'n I am!" cried Mrs. Narr, with a hoarse laugh. "He's down in Cheshire, awaiting to hear from me. In a week we'll have him living here with us, my dear, as right as a trivet! He knows the squire's dead, and he's waiting to hear the next move."

The news seemed incredible to Dora.

"Alive!" she murmured. "Coming here! How can I ever bear it?"

Mrs. Narr chuckled.

"The old man and I will have easy times now," she said, flourishing her bottle triumphantly. "We've got somebody to work for us. You ain't of age, you know, Dora. Your pa used to think a sight of you, and he'll think more of you than ever, now that you've got a hundred and fifty pounds! I've got a

good mind to telegraph down to Cheshire. He ought to be at hand."

Poor Dora! It had seemed before as if her burden were greater than she could bear, but the prospect of having to live with such a couple as this woman and the forger and drunkard, Jack Narr, was almost too much for her.

At this moment the knocker sounded loudly at the outer door.

Dora scarcely heard the sound in the excitement of her great grief.

"Jack 'll take the whole of your money," continued the woman, garrulously. "And I don't care if he does. He's the proper one to take charge of it. What are you standing there for, like a hop-pole, Dora? Sit down!"

At this juncture a low knock was heard on the door.

"Wish 'twas Jack!" muttered the woman.

Dora stood as if turned to stone, her face cold and white, like marble.

"Come in," hiccupped Mrs. Narr.

The door opened, and a young man entered.

One look at the noble face and tender eyes was enough for Dora.

The new-comer was the young Squire Weir.

"Oh, Noel, Noel!" cried the girl, from the depths of her despairing anguish. "Oh, Noel, help me! save me!"

She flew towards him as if for rescue, while the young squire closed the door, and surveyed the scene with a glance that took in thoroughly the state of affairs.

## CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG Mr. Weir, comprehending, in his single sweeping glance around the little lodging-house parlour, the painful position and horrible desolation of poor Dora, received her, as she sprang toward him, with outstretched hands and a face full of yearning tenderness, mingled with the gravest concern.

"My poor little Dora!" he exclaimed, pressing her hands warmly. "How you tremble!"

Oh, the unutterable delight which that firm, reassuring clasp gave to the frightened girl! Oh, the relief and gladness that surged over her heart as she looked up into his grave, honest and tender face!

"Oh, Noel, Noel!" she cried, clinging to him.

"I'm so glad you've come!"

"Didn't you know I would come, Dora?" asked Mr. Weir, in tender reproach. "Did you think I would not be here when you needed me?"

Dora did not answer, but still clung to him, trembling.

Mrs. Narr, who had been regarding the scene stupidly, now aroused herself, saying, with drunken solemnity:

"Wh'are you, any how? What want here? You mustn't come here infering 'tween me and my datter!"

The young man did not permit his disgust of the intoxicated creature to become visible, either in looks or words.

"I am Miss Dora's friend," he said, "and have called to see her—"

"She don't want see nobody!" interposed Mrs. Narr, with a ludicrous attempt at dignity. "She's perfly satisfied, and so'm I!"

Noel released Dora's hands, and gently put her from him. He then went up to the poor creature, whose haggard eyes fell before the steady, commanding gaze of the young man. His blue eyes, clear and keen, had a look of power in them which it did not occur to her that she could successfully resist.

"How pale you are, Dora!" he said, in a tone of tender compassion. "You have had a hard trial. Come and sit down by me, while you tell me all about it."

He led her to the sofa, and held her cold hands in a warm and gentle clasp.

Dora shuddered, and the hot, quick tears sprang to her eyes.

"How you have changed, Noel!" the girl exclaimed involuntarily.

"Have I? I have grown older, if you mean that. I have kept, until very lately, much of my old boyish spirit, but it was time I looked at life earnestly, and with a man's eyes. But now tell me of yourself, Dora."

"There is but little to tell, Noel," said Dora, sighing. "The morning you overtook me on the road from the Hare and Hounds to the Grange, I had been to the inn to see her," and she inclined her head towards Mrs. Narr, who had sunk into a slumber. "Until that morning, I had never dreamed that I was not Mr. Chessom's daughter!"

"My poor Dora!"

"She told me the truth. And that night, when I asked papa, he told me that I was only his adopted child. The shock of that discovery was second only to the awful shock that came a few hours later!"

"Poor little Dora!"

Encouraged by his genuine sympathy, Dora told the young man all her story.

When she had finished, he asked:

"Have you written to—Mr. Wamer?"

"Yes; I wrote to-day, before leaving the Grange. Tom posted the letter at Horsaam, as we went to the station. For—Mr. Wamer will get the letter to-morrow at the latest."

"And he will be here on the day after," said Mr. Weir, with a paling face. "He will fly to you, of course, Dora!"

"Yes, he will come at once," said Dora, blushing. "He—he told me that he loved me, Noel, and I expect to marry him, although I wrote to him yesterday and offered to release him. I told him all about my birth and parentage, and sent him my intended London address. He comes of a proud family, Noel. Do—do you think that it will make any difference to him that I am poor, and her daughter?"

"He will but love you the more, Dora," Noel forced himself to say, in a choking voice.

"Do you think so?" said Dora, with something of her old brightness. "Oh, Noel! Forgive me!"

As the evening fell, the landlady brought in the lighted candles; young Mr. Chessom took his leave, promising to call again in the morning.

Mrs. Narr did not arouse herself, and Dora drank her tea alone, and at last retired to her room, leaving the intoxicated woman still sleeping in her chair.

In the morning, however, when the young girl came out into the sitting-room fully dressed, Mrs. Narr was not there.

"She has awakened and gone to bed," thought Dora. "What a mother fate has given me! Oh, Heaven! can she be my mother?"

She went to the window, and, leaning against the sash, looked out upon the dreary little quadrangle of grass called "the park," and upon the straight row of dingy, tall, brick houses beyond.

The hour was yet early, and the novel sights peculiar to a town morning abounded. Milkmen, grocers' vans and hucksters' donkey-carts were well represented, with various other industries, and Dora was absorbed in watching them, when the door of the sitting-room opened, and Mrs. Narr entered, bearing a tray.

It was plain, at the first glance, that the woman was quite sober, and much ashamed of herself.

She set the tray down upon a chair, spread a clean white cloth on the table, and proceeded to lay the breakfast, sending frequent deprecating glances at the young girl.

"Good morning, Dora," she said, at last, coming nearer to the window.

"Good morning, Mrs. Narr," rejoined Dora, coldly, turning around.

"I suppose I didn't act very well last night, Dora," said the woman, deprecatingly. "The truth is, I ain't used to liquor, and I took a drop last night, and it set me wild. I don't know how I could have been so foolish. Was that gentleman who was here Mr. Wamer?"

"No. He was Mr. Noel Weir, who lives near the Grange. I have known him from my childhood."

"Ah, I thought he was a lord at the very least! What a stern way he had! I—I didn't say anything: did I, Dora?"

"I scarcely comprehend you," responded Dora. "If you mean to ask if you told anything you wished to keep secret, I presume you did. You said your husband was alive and in Cheshire, and would be here this week!"

The woman coloured a little, looked embarrassed, and then exclaimed, defiantly:

"Well, you must have known it, sooner or later. Jack is alive, and will probably be here to-morrow. I've been out already this morning, and have telegraphed to him. Of course, you won't betray him," she added, anxiously, "being he's your own father!"

"I shall not betray him."

The woman breathed more freely.

"He'd ought to have changed his name before coming back to England," she said. "But, after all, it wouldn't have done any good. He'd have let out his true name at the first ale-house he came to. But come to breakfast, Dora."

Dora obeyed the summons, taking her seat at the table. Mrs. Narr sat down opposite to her, and proceeded to wait upon her.

It was noticable that the woman's manner was more respectful than it had been. Dora's coldness and slight hauteur seemed to have had their due effect upon her. She watched her constantly and closely, as if seeking the cause of Dora's altered manner.

It was as if she feared she had given utterance to some vital secret during her intoxication of the previous night.

After breakfast, Mrs. Narr took the tray down to

the kitchen, and Dora busied herself with some sewing.

The day wore on. In the afternoon, Mr. Weir came again, remaining until evening.

This day was a sample of the two following it.

Jack Narr did not arrive as expected, and no letter had yet been received from Felix Wamer.

On the fourth day, however, the peculiar knock of the London postman was heard at the door, and a letter was presently brought up to Dora.

She recognised the handwriting as that of Wamer, and, disregarding Mrs. Narr's questions, hastily withdrew into her own room, locked the door, and gave herself up to its perusal.

It was an ardent letter, full of protestations of love, and assurances that Dora's changed circumstances had not affected his passion for her. On the contrary, he declared that her desolation touched his very soul, and that he longed to fly to her, that he might comfort and protect her. He said that he was compelled to remain with his cousin for some weeks yet, but that he would make her a flying visit on Tuesday.

"And to-day is Tuesday!" thought Dora, with a thrill of pleased anticipation. "The letter was written on Saturday. The servant must have delayed to post it. He is on his way now. He does not tell me at what hour he may arrive. He may be here at any moment."

She put the letter in her bosom, and hastened to make a few alterations in her toilette, which might make her more pleasing in the eyes of her aristocratic lover.

Then she went to the sitting-room.

"Well, what's your news?" demanded Mrs. Narr. "Mr. Wamer will be here to-day!"

"He will!" and the woman's eyes brightened.

"That is good. You can marry him if you want to, Dora. Only, whoever does marry you will have to pension off Jack and me, if he don't want us to settle in his neighbourhood!"

Dora had not thought that her marriage was to afford the Narrs an opportunity to obtain black-mail, and while she was considering the subject, in bitterness of spirit, a heavy step was heard on the stairs, and a thundering knock sounded on the door.

"Come in!" called out Mrs. Narr.

The door opened, and a man strode into the room. With a great cry of welcome, Mrs. Narr flew towards him, drew him further into the room, and embraced him.

"It's Jack, sure enough!" she ejaculated. "Jack at last!"

Dora looked at the new-comer curiously.

He was a stout man, of medium height, yet, by reason of his breadth, seeming shorter than he was. He had a red, full-moon face, framed in red and bristling hair, cropped close to his round head. A red fringe of whiskers adorned his face. He looked the incarnation of vulgarity; was coarse and bluff and ignorant; fond of drink and the vices that go hand in hand with drunkenness, and had, as he had had all his life, a positive genius for getting his living at the expense of some other person.

He was gaudily dressed in plaid trousers, a red velvet waistcoat, adorned with brass buttons, a blue satin scarf, in which was thrust a pin displaying an immense paste diamond, a velvet coat, and, finally, an old dented hat set jauntily on the back of his head.

It was evident that he had recruited his courage or his strength by use of his favourite beverage just before arriving at Lowater Crescent.

He looked, in short, like a retired and well-to-do prize-fighter.

Such was Jack Narr—the man who claimed to be the father of the pure, dainty, and blossom-like Dora.

"Yes, it's Jack!" cried the man, with a hoarse laugh, looking around him. "Very nice quarters, old girl! Setting up for a nob, ain't you? Beg parding, miss," he added, his gaze settling on Dora, and he made a sweeping bow to her. "I meant no 'fence."

Mrs. Narr pulled his sleeve.

"Don't you understand?" she exclaimed. "That's Dora—our girl, you know!"

"Ah, yes. Happy to see you, Miss Dora!"

"Not Miss Dora, Jack. She's our girl that Mr. Chessom adopted, and left without a farthing, you know. Mr. Chessom's dead, and his son has set Dora adrift to look out for herself. She's going to teach and support you and me, or else—"

"Is she?" asked Jack Narr, brightening at the thought of being supported by somebody. "It's very good of her, I must say. Shall be delighted Miss Dora—"

"Miss Dora again!" cried Mrs. Narr, impatiently.

"Can't an idea be got into your head, Jack, short of vaccinating it in? The girl's ours, and you must call her Dora or Dolly, just as you choose. But don't go to talking as if she was our superior!"

Jack Narr looked at the pale, high-bred girl, who was as unlike him and his wife as a stately lily or cultured rose is unlike a field bean, and his round red face grew puzzled.

"I know it's all right," he muttered; "but I cannot quite get at it!"

"You've been drinking, Jack. That's why you're so dreadful thick-headed."

"I've been drinking only enough to feel meller," said Mr. Narr, putting his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and balancing himself jauntily and alternately on his heels and toes. "Sure there's no mistake now, old woman? Sure that's the girl?"

"Yes. How often must I tell you? She is going to teach, as I said, to support us; or, what's more likely, she's going to marry a rich fellow, an heir to a title, and we can live on him. He'll pay us any sum to keep us out of the way, and save his pride. Ah, Jack, there are easy times ahead of us."

"Ah!" said a deep and significant voice at the open door.

Dora turned a startled look in that direction.

There, on the threshold, where he had been standing unseen for several minutes, with a strange and inscrutable expression on his countenance and a strange gleam in his eyes, stood Felix Wamer.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE boat-house, to which repeated allusion has been made, demands at this juncture a fuller description.

It lay at the end of the little stone pier, which stretched from the foot of the stairway in the rocks out into the waters of the little bay.

It was built in two stories, the lower one being of stone and some twenty feet in height.

The upper story was only about twelve feet high, and its side walls were almost entirely formed of moveable shutters, capable of being opened or closed at pleasure, after the fashion of many West Indian houses. These shutters were painted a deep, cool green, and in winter were protected by additional blinds. The roof projected slightly, and was painted in gay stripes, looking like a Venetian awning.

This cool upper chamber in the boat-house, high up over the water, and swept through its shutters by the coolest sea-breezes even in the sultriest day in summer, was one of the favourite resorts of the Lady Barbara Champney, who loved to lie upon its divan and listen to the musical washing of the waves against the stone walls below, or against the cliffs forming the sea-wall of the Manor.

It had become an especially favourite retreat since Lord Champney's return to Saltair, and since he had developed a taste for boating.

Left unfurnished during the winter, the boat-house parlour, as it might well have been called, was now, in June, in its full summer attire.

Upon the afternoon of the day on which Felix Wamer had chosen to go to town for his flying visit to Dora, the Lady Barbara was half reclining upon the cane-work divan, looking out on the sea through the partially-opened shutters.

Since the day on which he had made his memorable visit to her sitting-room, bringing with him the mischief-making bouquet, the Lady Barbara had not seen Lord Champney.

Insulted, tortured, and aggrieved, she had kept her chamber, not going forth even to her meals. Tiring of her self-imprisonment at last, however, she had come out this afternoon for a stroll in the garden, and a lounge in the boat-house, and intended to make her appearance at the dinner-table.

The afternoon was bright and pleasant, with a glorious flood of sunshine on the glittering waters, with their dancing foam-crests, and with a strong, sweet breeze that was inexpressibly delightful after the sultriness of the morning.

The sea was dotted with the bright sails of fisher craft, and larger vessels, and the Lady Barbara was idly watching them, and wondering which among them all was Lord Champney's sail, for he had gone out an hour before in the little yacht.

"He may have gone over to Cromer," she thought, toying with the slats of the shutters. "He must miss Felix Wamer, who started for town this morning. And that reminds me. Willard Ames and I were strangely unjust to poor Felix, in thinking him guilty of a conspiracy against me. But that is the way we misjudge people," she added, sighing. "We throw away a sincere friendship for a seeming one—the real diamond for the paste! Sidney knew his cousin best, after all."

Watching yet a little longer, the Lady Barbara distinguished one sail which was making direct before the wind for Saltair. A further scrutiny convinced her that this was the graceful little yacht, homeward-bound.

"I don't wish Sidney to find me here," she said to



himself. "He will think that I have been watching for him. I will go upon the land."

She regarded the approaching boat through her spy-glass, and then, convinced of its identity, arose and shook down the long folds of her dress, preparatory to retracing her steps to the land.

She presented a charming picture as she stood there, taking a last peep at the swift-sailing yacht through the interstices of the shutter, with her pale gold hair coiled high at the back of her head, one long curl straying over her shoulder, gleaming like sunshine, and with the folds of her sea-green silk floating about her, giving her the look of an Undine.

And so thought—it was apparent—a man who had come up the flight of stone stairs silently, from the boat-house below.

He was standing on the topmost stair, and regarding the Lady Barbara with a glance of the most intense admiration, taking in with his keen gaze every feature of her dazzling loveliness, from the perfect face to the gleaming curl, and the white arm which, bare to the elbow, the loose drapery falling away from it, looked as if sculptured from the whitest marble.

This man, who was of middle age, was strikingly handsome, after a bold and wicked fashion, and had a military air that was infinitely becoming to him.

He was Colonel Effingham, an officer in the army, a man of the worst type; yet, because of his handsome face and fortune, his polished manners and air of fashion, he was courted and admired by half the fashionable world.

The look of admiration deepened in his bold black eyes as the Lady Barbara's attitude changed to one of unconscious grace.

"Beautiful!" he exclaimed, aloud, as if in rapture. "Superb!"

The Lady Barbara started as if stung, and turned round hastily, facing him.

"Colonel Effingham!" she ejaculated, in amazement.

The colonel, holding his hat in his hand, bowed deeply.

"It is I, Lady Barbara," he said, humbly. "Pardon my intrusion, but the servant sent me here in quest of you."

"Indeed!" cried the Lady Barbara, with haughty scorn. "I receive no one here but my friends. Be kind enough to relieve me of your presence at once!"

The colonel flushed under her cutting tone, but came up the stairs, approaching her.

"Some one must have mislaid me to you, Lady Barbara," he said, deprecatingly. "Am I not your friend? Certainly if a kindly feeling towards you could constitute me such, I am one."

"I have no wish to hold a conference with you," said the Lady Barbara, pointing to the staircase. "Go!"

"Surely you will not condemn me unheard?" persisted the colonel.

The Lady Barbara's blue eyes flashed like drawn steel.

"You dare urge your defence," she cried, "when you have grossly insulted me beyond all forgiveness by the bouquet and the note enclosed in it which you sent me the other day? You have not been condemned unheard, Colonel Effingham. My husband would have punished you on sight—"

"You showed him the note, then?" interrupted the colonel, his countenance falling.

"No; but he saw the bouquet, and knew that it enclosed a note. To save my name from scandal, I screened you from Lord Champney's wrath."

The colonel smiled again.

"But beware of so insulting me the second time!" said her ladyship, haughtily.

"I know Lord Champney's unfortunate peculiarity," observed Colonel Effingham, coolly. "To speak to him against any man's attentions would be like pouring spirits on a fire. He has a theory that any woman who respects herself will never be insulted. Consequently, when you tell him you have been insulted, what will he say to you?"

"I shall not appeal to him. I shall avenge my own wrongs."

The colonel arched his brows.

"But how?" he asked.

"If you venture on my premises again, I will have you horse-whipped; that is how! Since you are insensible to appeals made to your honour, let us see whether you will be sensible to an infamous punishment at the hands of a menial."

The colonel glared at her ladyship.

"This to me!" he ejaculated. "Be careful, Barbara Champney. I never forgive an insult in my life. I could not forgive one even from you, if I did not love you so."

"Love me—a married woman!"

"Yes. You are married, it is true; but such a marriage as yours is a marriage but in name. I love you; and, loving you, I forgive you. Hear me, Bar-

bara. I have loved you always. I know that you are unhappy in your married life—that your husband is not worthy of you."

"It is false! He is worthy."

"He is jealous and exacting to the highest degree. He has no faith in you, and dares not let you look upon another man, lest you should prefer that other. This is no life for you, Barbara, beautiful Barbara! You were made to live in an eternal sunshine. This cruel jealousy on the part of your husband is killing you. If you would but listen to me, I would make your life a very dream of brightness. I love you, Barbara. I love you!"

He told the truth. The Lady Barbara's scorn of him, her repellant coldness, had caused his first fancy for her to deepen into a wild, mad passion. It was his nature to long to possess that which was, or seemed, beyond his reach.

Besides, Effingham was the dupe and instrument of Felix Warner, who had persuaded him that he had but to sue earnestly to possess. Warner's great scheme was to separate Lord Champney and his wife, by persuading the former, whose weakness he well knew, of the infidelity of the latter. In the event of his lordship's dying childless, Warner would reap his great success by inheriting both title and estates. And to make the Lady Barbara appear faithless in the eyes of her husband, Warner had impressed upon the mind of Effingham that the Lady Barbara secretly loved him, but that her pride was stronger than her love.

Effingham's vanity made him believe this horrible falsehood even now, in the face of her ladyship's scorn and contempt.

"I love you, Barbara!" he repeated. "I love you!"

The Lady Barbara grew white to the very lips.

Glancing out of the open shutters, she saw the little yacht under a spread of sail, driving straight for the boat-house, and so near that she could distinguish Lord Champney's features as he sat in the boat alone.

A feeling of desperation came over her.

"You will not relieve me of your hateful presence?" she demanded.

"Not till you say you love me."

Her ladyship pointed through the shutters.

"Do you see that boat coming?" she asked calmly. "It contains my husband. Will you go now?"

"I must repeat what I said. I will not go till you say you love me. Let your husband come. He shall find me on my knees at your feet. Then, Barbara, you will have to take refuge in my arms from the storm of his hatred and jealousy."

"Monster!" said her ladyship, her eyes gleaming like meteors. "Coward! Was there ever known a creature so base under that name before?"

"Queenly Barbara!"

"Silence! Do not dare to speak my name. You dare talk of love to me!"

If a look could have slain him, Effingham would have fallen dead at her feet.

But he, believing in his ultimate victory, only laughed at her awful anger and scorn.

"There's no use in putting on all these airs to me, Barbara," he exclaimed. "Your husband does not deserve you—"

"Hush! Dare not to take his honoured name on your vile lips!"

"You have greater faith in him than he has in you," sneered Effingham.

The Lady Barbara looked again from the window.

How very near the boat was coming!

She could see the sombre look on Lord Champney's face now, as he sat on the boat-cushions, moody and troubled and darkly anxious.

What if he should come and find this man there!

"How near he is!" said Effingham, coolly, his glance following hers. "He will come into the boat-house. He will hear voices up here and come up. He will find us—and then! What will he say, Barbara, to see me at your feet? Ah, you tremble! You are afraid of him. Tell me that you will try to love me—encourage me in the least—say I may come again—and I will avert from you the coming terror! Say something, Barbara, and I will go!"

"Coward! miscreant!" was her indignant response. "I would not speak the word you want were it to save my life. I would sooner die than give you the smallest word of encouragement!"

The boat was coming swiftly near.

Colonel Effingham drew closer to her, a smile of triumph deepening on his visage.

"He has done me the honour to be jealous of me, Barbara," he exclaimed. "He shall find us here together. I shall seem startled, frightened, repentant."

The Lady Barbara measured the distance to the staircase with a single glance.

Then suddenly—so suddenly as to startle Effingham—she made a quick spring, passed him, gained

the staircase, and flew down the broad stone steps like a flash of light.

With an oath, her enemy sprang after her.

Down the long flight of stairs went the Lady Barbara into the boat-house. Along that side of the boat-house ran a narrow platform, overlooking the basin of water in which the little yacht was kept moored.

The Lady Barbara ran along the platform, threw open the door at its end, which gave entrance upon the pier, and hurried over the stone pathway to the land.

She was half-way across, shadowed from observation on the seaward side by the boat-house, and from the land by the cliffs, when Effingham overtook her, clutching her by the arm.

"Well done, Lady Barbara!" he cried darkly.

"But we are as much alone here as in the boat-house. Champney shall find us here, as in the act of parting, my arm around your waist! It is not too late. Only speak one word—only say that you will let me meet you again—and I will go away peacefully. Speak, Barbara!"

He stole his arm around her waist, despite her struggles.

"Let me go!" she exclaimed, with the tone and mien of an insulted queen.

He laughed like a demon.

They could hear the boat now, as it ground against the boat-house. They could hear the clanking of the chains, as Lord Champney tried to unfasten the wide sliding-doors.

A moment more and then—

The Lady Barbara panted in a deadly rage and terror. An awful faintness stole over her. Everything darkened around her.

"He's going into the boat-house," said Effingham.

"One word Barbara—one word!" He put his bearded face down to her deathly white one, and his moustache swept her cheeks, as he added:

"You refuse the word, then—proudest of women! Then I'll take a kiss! What! is he coming?"

With his arm still around her waist, he lifted his head and listened.

(To be continued.)

## THE LATE EARL OF CLARENDON.

THE decease of the Right Hon. the Earl of Clarendon, which took place somewhat unexpectedly on the 27th of June, will leave a large blank in the world of politics, both home and foreign. He was not only one of that band of experienced statesmen, of whom so very few now remain, who were prominent figures in those great political commotions, European as well as English, that came so thickly in the past generation, but he, at the time of his death, still retained high and powerful political influence as the Foreign Minister of England. In him the science of diplomacy has lost one of its most accomplished professors, and the Liberal party one who, though a Whig by tradition, always gave Liberal measures a strong and generous support, and was, indeed, one of the chief elements of strength in the ministry of Mr. Gladstone.

The Right Hon. George William Frederick Villiers, Earl of Clarendon, near Salisbury, and Baron Hyde, of Hindon, in the county of Wilts, K.G., G.C.B., P.C., Chancellor of the Queen's University in Ireland, &c., was born in London, on the 26th of January, 1800. He was the eldest son of the late Hon. George Villiers (who died in March, 1827), the third son of the first earl, by the Hon. Teresa Parker, daughter of John, first Lord Boringdon, and sister of the first Earl of Morley. He succeeded to the family honours, as fourth earl, 22nd December, 1838, upon the death of his uncle, John Charles, third Earl.

Having been at all times favourable to the principles of Free Trade, as soon as he saw that Sir Robert Peel was becoming convinced of their truth, Lord Clarendon, though firmly adhering to his own party, gave a hearty support to the commercial policy which that statesman inaugurated. Of the total repeal of the Corn Laws there had never been a more staunch and persistent advocate than his brother, Mr. Charles Pelham Villiers, the member for Wolverhampton; and when the Bill for their repeal was brought forward for discussion in the House of Peers, Lord Clarendon accompanied his vote for the measure by a speech of great ability. On the return of the Liberals to office in 1846, with Lord John Russell at their head, Lord Clarendon was appointed President of the Board of Trade, and in the following year he was entrusted with the important post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

At that period, the famine, caused by the failure of the potato crop, was desolating that unhappy country, and Lord Clarendon did not enter on his Viceroyalty under the most favourable auspices. His nomination, however, was one of the most popular appointments made by the new Premier;



[THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF CLARENDON, K.G., ETC.]

and he at once exerted himself to mitigate the sufferings of the people by organising machinery for their relief. His popularity was to some extent diminished by the agitation of the "Young Ireland" party; and when a part of the population, under the leadership of Mr. Smith O'Brien, rose in arms against the Queen, the measures which Lord Clarendon was forced to take to vindicate the law created considerable animosity against him, although he had not appealed to the Legislature for any extraordinary coercive powers. In suppressing these outbreaks, Lord Clarendon most wisely declined the proffered services of the Orange Lodges. With similar firmness and impartiality, shortly afterwards, he superseded Lord Roden and two other members of Orange Lodges in the Commission of the Peace, on account of the "untoward" affair in the case of Dolly's Brae. His conduct as Lord Lieutenant in this transaction was severely questioned at the time in the House of Peers, not only by Lord Roden's friends, but by the late Lord Derby; but Lord Clarendon's reply was a masterly vindication of the policy pursued by the Irish Executive. It cannot, however, be said that when he laid down his viceregal office he was the idol of the multitude, or the object of its "veneration and worship," to use the expression of Lord Brougham, as he had been four or five years before.

In February, 1853, Lord Clarendon was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen, that post being vacated by Lord John Russell, after he had held it scarcely two months; and it fell to his lot in this capacity to direct the several intricate and difficult negotiations of the British Government with France, Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, and Turkey, which the Russian war entailed. When the Aberdeen Ministry fell in the spring of 1855 Lord Derby was commanded by Her Majesty to construct a Cabinet; and on this occasion the Tory chief expressed a strong desire to leave the direction of Foreign

Affairs in the hands of Lord Clarendon. Lord Derby was unable to form a Cabinet, and Lord Palmerston, who then succeeded to the helm, in reforming the Cabinet of Lord Aberdeen, very naturally handed back the portfolio of Foreign Affairs to Lord Clarendon, who in that capacity, and as British Plenipotentiary, signed the Treaty of Peace which was negotiated in Paris at the commencement of the following year. His services on that occasion elicited the highest praise both in Parliament and from the press, and it was said that he was offered, but declined, the coronet of a marquiss. He continued to hold the direction of Foreign Affairs until the retirement of his chief in 1858. In 1864 he rejoined Lord Palmerston's third Ministry as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; but resumed his former post as Foreign Secretary in the following year, under the Administration of Lord Russell. Remaining out of office with his party during Lord Derby's last Ministry and that of Mr. Disraeli, he returned in December, 1868, on the formation of the Gladstone Cabinet, to the office which he held to the last, and with which his name will hereafter be chiefly identified.

The Earl of Clarendon was descended in the male line from the brother of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and in the female line from Edward Hyde, the celebrated Lord Chancellor Clarendon of the time of Charles II. (who was the grandfather of two Queens Consort of England), through the granddaughter of Henry, last Earl of Clarendon of that line, who married the Hon. Thomas Villiers, a younger son of William, second Earl of Jersey. This Thomas Villiers was in 1776 created Earl of Clarendon, and he was grandfather of the Minister now deceased. His lordship, who was sworn a Privy Councillor in 1840, and nominated a Knight of the Garter in 1849, married on the 3rd of June, 1839, the Lady Catherine Grimston, eldest daughter of James Walter, first Earl of Verulam, and widow of Mr. John Foster Barham,

By this marriage he had several children, of whom three sons and three daughters survive. One of his daughters, Lady Alice, is now Lady Skelmersdale; the eldest daughter, Lady Constance, was married in May, 1864, to the Hon. Frederick Arthur Stanley, M.P., brother of Lord Derby; and the third, Lady Emily Theresa, is married to Mr. Odo William Leopold Russell. He is succeeded in the family title and estates by his eldest surviving son, Edward, Lord Hyde, M.P. for the borough of Brecon, who was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took his degree in 1867. His lordship, who now becomes fifth Earl of Clarendon, is a Deputy Lieutenant for Warwickshire. He was born at the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, 11th February, 1846. His lordship's brothers, the Hon. George Patrick Hyde, an ensign in the Grenadier Guards, and the Hon. Francis Hyde, were born respectively in 1847 and 1852. The new peer is the seventh who has passed to the House of Lords from the lower Chamber since the commencement of the present parliament—the Marquess of Westminster, the Earl of Derby, Earl Howe, and Lords Henniker, Greville, and Leconfield having all been members of the House of Commons when it assembled in 1868.

To Lord Clarendon's family history it only remains to add, that one of his lordship's brothers, the late Hon. Henry Montagu Villiers, was for some years rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury, and afterwards bishop, in succession, of Carlisle and of Durham; and that another brother, the Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers, many years M.P. for Wolverhampton, long Advocate-General, and afterwards Chief Commissioner of the Poor Laws, was one of the earliest and ablest advocates of the repeal of the Corn Laws in the days when, for the most part, even Whig noblemen and gentlemen were disposed to support agricultural protection. His sister, Lady Theresa, was twice married, first to Mr. Thomas H. Lister, and afterwards to the late Right Hon. Sir George Cornswall Lewis, M.P.

The retrospect of so long a public and official life as that of Lord Clarendon is full of instruction and interest. Four times in succession did he fill the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Gladstone's is the sixth Liberal Cabinet in which he held a prominent post. For nearly half a century he took a part more or less direct in the diplomatic service of the country; and his name, therefore, is well known in every Court and capital of the world. His principal qualification for the posts he filled was, perhaps, his unwearied industry. Probably there never was a harder worker, except, perhaps, Lord Palmerston.

From the time of the Russian war he was the ruling mind in our relations with foreign Powers. Since Lord Aberdeen no Minister had been so intimate with so many sovereigns, and thus he was more than once enabled to smooth over dissensions which were tending to become dangerous. A notable instance of this occurred of late, when he acted as intermediary between the King of Prussia and the Emperor Napoleon, and was enabled to convey personal assurances which assuaged the jealousy of the French and the corresponding suspicion of the Prussians. In fact, he had become, if not the Nestor of diplomacy, like the late King of the Belgians, at any rate one old enough and respected enough to take a high personal position in dealing with statesmen both at home and abroad.

To the last he was as large in principles, as accurate in details, as prompt in action, as if he had been 50 instead of 70. Take, for instance, the matter of the Greek Brigands. It is well known that Lord Clarendon felt acutely the murder of our countrymen. He was anxious lest it should be thought he had left any means unemployed to save them. But if there were any misgivings, they must have been dispelled by the official correspondence published on the subject. Whoever else was apathetic, there was one who was zeal incarnate, and that was Lord Clarendon.

The remains of the Earl of Clarendon were interred in the new cemetery at Watford, Herts., on Saturday, the 2nd July, in a strictly private and unostentatious manner, according to his lordship's express injunction.

On hearing of Lord Clarendon's death, Mr. Fish sent to Mr. Motley the following telegram, which will doubtless be read with general satisfaction as a recognition of the earnest endeavours of Lord Clarendon to consolidate and maintain the most cordial friendship between England and the United States:

"Washington, June 27th.

"The death of the Earl of Clarendon removes a statesman whose fame belongs to the world, and whose loss will be felt by other nations than that in whose behalf he laboured for the advance of civilisation and in the interests of peace. The President tenders the sympathy of the people of the United States to her Majesty and to the British people, and condolence to those to whom the loss brings personal grief."





[THE SPY.]

## MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

THEY were to give a ball at Eaglescliffe Park. The earl would have it so, and Beatrix Dudevant, eager to air her approaching greatness, was secretly the instigator of the whole matter.

Lady Violet made a feeble opposition at first, but was overruled, and preparations went forward on a scale of magnificence that the county had rarely seen before.

Miss Dudevant made a special trip to London, to order the most elegant and wonderful toilette her fancy could devise, and to stop the mouths of her most importunate creditors with the news of her approaching marriage. The indelicacy of thus privately making known an engagement—her own, too—which it was the understanding was not yet to be made public, did not affect Beatrix, if, indeed, it struck her at all.

"Lord Eaglescliffe will find himself too much committed to retreat if he should wish to," was her complaisant mental comment on her own course.

It was the first time Eaglescliffe had been so fully thrown open since the accession of the present lord, and nothing was spared that could add to the brilliancy and importance of the occasion.

Standing high as it did, and lighted through the whole magnificent pile, the mansion looked from the distance like a palace of fire suspended in mid-air.

Within, the scene was of indescribable gorgeousness. The rooms were one blaze of radiance, one wilderness of perfume and beauty.

There were other very beautiful women there, other exquisite toilettes, but the queens of the evening, each in her own way, were Lady Violet and her London friend, Miss Dudevant. Conscious that, in spite of her wonderful loveliness, Lady Violet's beauty was not of a style to detract from hers, that, on the contrary, her own perfections were enhanced by the contrast, Beatrix scarcely quitted her side till the evening was far advanced. Though Lady Violet had seen very little of fashionable society, this, indeed, being the grandest affair at which she had ever been present, she bore herself with a grace, ease, and self-possession that women who had reigned in the fashionable world half their lives might have envied.

Beatrix did envy her, all, everything—her position, her beauty, the simple yet superb unapproachableness of her toilette.

Lady Violet wore a dress of almost priceless white lace, with those rare, costly jewels, pale pink pearls about her snowy throat, in her hair, and on her bare, exquisitely moulded arms.

Miss Dudevant wore her favourite colour—clouds of azure, sown with stars of brodered seed pearls, and sapphires flashing azure light on her dimpled neck and arms, and in her yellow, glittering hair.

Lord Eaglescliffe could scarcely keep his eyes in any other direction. All his graceful duties of host were performed in his usual courtly, high-bred manner. His attentions to the feminine portion of his guests were characterised by a gentle chivalry of bearing that caused many a lovely eye to linger on his tall, still handsome person, eloquently, and many an ambitious heart to throb at the recollection that he was a single man. But his lordship's devotion to the beautiful London coquette and belle, Miss Dudevant, became sufficiently apparent before midnight, without the assistance of Beatrix's graceful, sly way of impressing the nature of their relations upon others.

Miss Dudevant was in her element. All the early portion of the evening she was occupied with the earl and his queenly daughter, a conspicuous figure in the reception of the guests. While she dazzled her infatuated lover with her small witcheries, she turned the heads of many another in the throng constantly revolving about them.

Lady Violet was engrossed by her own responsibilities, and intoxicated slightly with the excitement of the scene, the admiring glances she constantly encountered, the low comments upon her appearance, snatches of which would occasionally float to her ears. Captain Evelyn, looking handsome and interesting enough to be the hero of any romance, remained constantly beside her chair, privileged as he had seldom been before, to meet those beautiful, eloquent eyes, which seemed to forget, in the animation of the moment, to look coldly.

In spite of her resolves, in spite of the cloud upon her life—the worm at her heart—Lady Violet, in her lovely and untried youth, found the chalice of the world's pleasure sweet to her lips.

Who knows but she said to herself this evening: "For once these few hours I will forget. I harm no one but myself if I am happy this short while, certainly not the man capable of a frightful flirtation with a woman like Beatrix Dudevant."

Where she leaned in her exquisite young beauty, she had only to lift her white lids to look in the adoring eyes of the man to whom she was heaven, sacrilegious as that may seem—who was heaven to

her in return—and, for once, that lovely glance did not rebuke him. For once those perfect lips smiled for him without stint, and the musical voice sparkled with rich cadence and sweet laughter.

In the restless brown eyes of the handsome young guardsman a spark smouldered, as the woman he loved as few men love women, thus shed the glory of her fascinations upon him.

"Does she think that I am a stone?" he thought. "Does she think she can go back to the old, cold airs after this? Has Beatrix Dudevant taught her to deny her own heart, and to look a falsehood?"

The far-famed Eaglescliffe conservatories were fairyland that night. Six wide, high, glass-domed pavilions opened vista upon vista of bewildering luxuriance, perfume, and colour. Fountains played in every direction, tossing their silver spray from marble basins, and snowy statues gleamed from amid the large-leaved, dark-green foliage, and scarlet creepers. By an artful contrivance they were lighted entirely from above, and this white radiance streaming down upon the scene produced an effect indescribably lovely.

From the dancing room the heated guests flocked hither, and through the cool, perfumed aisles of these vast flower palaces the tide of beauty and fashion flowed in a constantly-changing stream.

As Captain Evelyn, with Lady Violet upon his arm, moved slowly down the length of the seemingly interminable conservatories, two piercing eyes followed the movements of the pair. My lord's man Turner, had watched these two a great portion of the evening.

Conway had said to himself often since that bitter sojourn in Australia, that his heart could never throb quick or slow again for any woman; yet tonight, at the sight of this royally beautiful creature, who believed him her husband, this peerless patrician girl, who was as far above him as the stars above the earth, his veins tingled as though a tiny current of flame ran through them.

Times were woefully changed with him, he thought, cleaving his teeth with a suppressed curse, as he watched Handsome Evelyn, as the young guardsman was sometimes named, leaning over Lady Violet's chair, brushed by her silken perfumed hair, looking in her eyes of light. That had been his privilege once, might have been still, if he had but played his cards differently.

Once he had been an honoured guest at assemblages like this, and beautiful women had blushed at his glance, and suffered him to press their white, jewelled fingers, unbuked.

Involuntarily he put his hand to his scarred face. It would never charm any woman again. Even she who had once been enough in love with it to dare the dangers of that mysterious midnight ride to London, to become an actor in the most outrageous farce that ever took the solemn name of marriage, hated it now.

"And no wonder!" he said to himself, as the sight of her beauty smote him with a strange pang. "None but a brute would have met her as I did, after such a separation and such a parting. Who knows what might have been, if I had behaved differently when I met her? Curse it all! I'm always making mistakes that an idiot would be ashamed of. But," he added, after a brief, seething pause, "if Evelyn thinks he is going to have it all his own way now, he will find himself woefully mistaken."

From a thick screen of oriental foliage, he watched Captain Evelyn and Lady Violet, as they paused, at last, beside the open door of the furthest compartment of the conservatories.

A flight of white marble steps led from this door, and the two stood quite alone, within the broad doorway, with the silvery, soft light from the crystal roof raining down upon them, and the enchanted light of youth and love glowing in their eyes.

They were silent—that delicious, half-conscious silence that says so much more than words—each heart throbbing fast, Lady Violet certainly not daring to speak, lest her voice should betray the sweet tumult within her.

From his concealment, Conway could see the look of passionate love with which Roy Evelyn was regarding her. Her downcast face was turned slightly from him; but he could imagine how it was flushing, perhaps, and his heart leaped with rage—with impotent, half-mad fury.

"If he speaks to her now—if she answers him now—all is lost!" he muttered, with an oath, and glanced wildly in the direction of the comparatively distant promenade. "Why can't they, some of them, come this way, and interrupt those two fools!" he said to himself, savagely.

Then, with an exclamation, he darted noiselessly towards the nearest group. He had recognised Beatrice Dudevant among them, and Lord Eaglescliffe was not with her. He approached with as respectful an air as he could muster, in his haste and agitation.

"If you please, miss, could I speak with you a minute? It's—it's very important," he stammered, in some confusion, for him.

Miss Dudevant looked surprised; she turned pale, in fact.

"I wonder if he calls it 'betraying' what I said to Violet," she mused, as with forced smiles she stepped into the shadow of some tall ferns with Conway, with evident reluctance.

He spoke with small ceremony.

"I want you to interrupt that tête-à-tête yonder," he said, hurriedly, indicating the pair in the distance; "in return, I will tell you a secret. Lady Violet is my wife. Don't stop to wonder. Find an excuse to interrupt them. It must be done."

"I will," said Beatrice, instantly, and turned away. She was half-crazed with joy at this revelation. But she controlled herself, and taking the arm of the escort she had quitted to speak to Conway, sauntered carelessly towards the lower extremity of the conservatories.

The enchanted pair in the doorway turned as they approached, and bent their steps in another direction. Beatrice was near enough to see that both faces wore an expression of agitation, and with a jealous throb at her own heart, for she liked Captain Evelyn as well as she was capable of liking anybody, she followed.

Captain Evelyn and Lady Violet turned again presently. Beatrice turned also, slightly compressing her rosy lips as she continued her rattling chat with her companion, regardless of his evident surprise at the abruptness of her movements.

Captain Evelyn glanced back over his shoulder. There was resolution and determination in his look, and Miss Dudevant saw it. Perhaps she even had a faint intimation of what Conway meant when he said: "It must be done," so emphatically. At any rate, she moved slightly forward, quitted her escort's arm suddenly, and put her hand on Lady Violet's.

"Dear Vio," she whispered, "won't you come with me a moment. I am ill. I, I feel as though I was going to faint."

Lady Violet paused at once. She was glad of the interruption. She had been upon the very point of the most absurd madness, she said to herself, of confessing all, everything to the man she loved; of throwing herself upon his generosity, and appealing to his wisdom, concerning that unhappy secret which weighed down her very soul.

Guided by Evelyn was conscious that he had been that moment very near the solution of the mystery

of Lady Violet's contradictory bearing towards him, and the look he gave Miss Dudevant was not by any means a friendly one. Generally speaking, it would have been the wildest of all doings, for a woman in Lady Violet's supposed circumstances, to confide such a secret as she had been about to confide to Captain Evelyn concerning Conway. In this case, such a revelation, could Lady Violet's proud soul have been brought to make it, would have solved every difficulty of those fatal meshes which entangled her and raised her to the pinnacle of a happiness unimagined and almost sublime.

But the moment had passed. The soft emotion and agitation which had so nearly unsealed those sweet proud lips would never touch Lady Violet again till it was too late.

Beatrice had drooped a moment against her friend's shoulder, and announced herself better, but with an assumption of childish willfulness, clung to her still. To Lady Violet's relief, too, it must be confessed, though one might have imagined the contrary, from the pallor of the exquisite face whose bloom did not return again, save in fitful flashes, that only betokened her inward fever and despair.

"I will linger no longer over the job I came here to do," muttered Lord Eaglescliffe's new man, as he lurked in a shadowy position of the ground, and darkly watched the glowing mansion.

Even here the air seemed to throb with music and laughter, and long shoots of golden lights traversed the gloom.

"Only a chicken-hearted idiot would dally over his work so," he said; "and Conway the convict ought not to be more scrupulous than Conway the gentleman was. I don't know what has come over me, unless it is my lady, with her witch's beauty. The demon! How handsome she is. Her eyes go through me like a sweet fire."

Leaving his folded arms upon the trellised back of a rustic seat, he dropped his face upon them, and stood some moments.

"I don't know why I should hesitate so," he muttered at last, lifting his head and beginning to pace to and fro with a step as though he ground an enemy into the sod every time he put down his heel. "She hates me, and loves him already, and the old man's life hangs by a thread now. With all her temper and pride, she'd give in when she saw there was no other way. And to own her, body and soul, to hold her once in these arms, my own, in spite of handsome Evelyn, would be worth wading through seas of blood. Besides, I don't propose to kill anybody; oh! no," with a horrible sneer.

The fact that he had in a momentary frenzy of jealousy which surprised himself, told Beatrice Dudevant so much troubled him greatly.

He did not know that Miss Dudevant's marriage with Lord Eaglescliffe depended on Lady Violet marrying first, but he knew of the engagement between the belle and the old lord, and feared her betrayal to him of the secret he had so rashly trusted to her keeping.

"There'd be a general sifting of matters in that case," he said to himself, "and the deuce to pay generally; and anything happening to the earl in the midst would not increase my favour in Lady Violet's eyes. It is odd, but little as I have reason to love that old man, I can't bear to hurt him. I must warn Miss Dudevant that I am not a man to be lightly trifled with."

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

NATURES such as Beatrice Dudevant's, while wonderfully amenable to the influence of fear, have great confidence in the small resources of their own cunning. She meant that Lord Eaglescliffe should learn his daughter's marriage at the earliest moment that she could convey the knowledge to him with safety to herself. Her own interests, she selfishly argued, demanded such a course.

Doubtless, if Conway could have things his way, her own marriage with the earl would never take place; and as for settlements, of course, if Conway was Lady Violet's husband, he would want them as small as possible.

The third day after the ball, Beatrice's maid, Sparks, slipped away to London, and back again, without anybody's discovering her absence but her mistress, at whose bidding she went.

The following morning, as the five were at breakfast, cozily chatting, the letters were brought in, among them one directed, in a singularly uncouth hand, to his lordship, the "earl of Eaglescliffe."

Lady Violet glanced up carelessly, little suspecting how vitally interested she was in that scrawl; and Beatrice, who had got the letter bag, as usual, danced about the room with it, coquettishly holding it out of his lordship's reach, and playing off her pretty airs with as charming a manner as if she had been in utter ignorance of the malicious contents of the vile missive.

At last she gave it to him, standing archly by while he opened it, and pretending to try to peep at the contents, while the earl, as much amused as she, laughingly evaded her.

Captain Evelyn had joined his uncle and Lady Evelyn the day before. Lady Violet and Miss Miggs were the sole spectators of this interesting scene.

Suddenly, the hand which, in this playful struggle, had captured both of Beatrice's for safer keeping, turned cold. Lord Eaglescliffe rose from the chair, staggering, his look deathly.

His daughter was beside him in an instant, and Beatrice would have flung herself upon him, but Lady Violet sternly thrust her away.

Sinking back into his chair, the stricken earl groped feebly for his daughter's hand, gasped some incoherent word, and never spoke again.

Two physicians came as soon as it was possible to get them there, and his lordship continued to breathe in a laboured manner some hours; but long before the dawning of another day even that sign of life had ceased.

It was Miss Miggs who brought Lady Violet the letter which had fallen from the dead earl's hand, in the first shock, and lain unnoticed by all save herself and Miss Dudevant. Beatrice gave the governess an angry look as she took possession of the note, and ordered her to give it to her at once. Miss Miggs timidly, but firmly, refused to do so, and took the fatal missive to Lady Violet at the first opportunity.

My lady had been prevailed upon to quit the bedside of the still breathing earl with the greatest difficulty, and was nervously pacing the drawing-room as Miggs entered, her hands locked rigidly, her lips colourless with pain. The blow had been a terrible one to her.

She received the letter Miggs brought absently, but quickened to interest at her brief explanation, and her slight hand shook as she read the vilely written scrawl.

"My lord," it said, "yours nu vally is Vain Conway, and nobody els. he has run awa and cum back, Lady Violet and him has bin marrid."

"A FRIEND."

As she read, my lady grew cold and still as marble.

"If he dies," she said, with icy lips, "it will be this has killed him. Did you ever see any writing like this, Miggs?"

The pale governess came forward.

"Shall I read it, my lady?"

"Have you not read it already?"

"My lady!"

"Of course not, Mousie. I knew that. But everybody is so black-hearted, one never knows—nor one's mind. Let me see some of that woman Sparks' writing, if you can."

"I have some now. Her young man is in London, and she writes letters to him and gets me to copy them."

At any other time Lady Violet would have smiled. Now she only said:

"Bring it at once. Stay—I will go with you."

Miggs stood patiently by, while Lady Violet sternly compared the two specimens, and then as sternly folded them together.

"It was Sparks," she said, sternly. "Sparks wrote it, and her mistress told her what to write. You and I will wait, Mousie. There is time enough."

The little governess laid a small, thin hand on my lady's arm.

"Yes, time, time enough," she murmured, in a half-fright; "but don't look so, my dear; my dear, whatever it is, don't look that way."

"I couldn't look what I feel if I tried," flashed my lady, as she quitted the room.

Lord Eaglescliffe drew his last breath about midnight; and Miss Dudevant, ever on the watch for the main chance, and remembering that to be the chosen friend of her who was Countess of Eaglescliffe was an enviable position, at least, flung herself with a wild burst of sobs now upon Lady Violet.

"He was all we both had," she cried, hysterically.

The young countess had shed no tears. She seemed turned to stone. She caught her breath shudderingly at the touch of those false arms, and called sharply to Miggs, who was hovering near.

"Take her away," she said, icily. "You and I know that she killed him."

Miss Dudevant recoiled. She had not guessed that she was suspected of any connection with the letter the earl had received, and she shook for once deprived of her words. She quitted the apartment her presence desecrated in silence, Miggs conducting her.

"You'll be going from the Cliffe now, very soon, I presume," Miggs ventured to say, awkwardly, and with manifest hesitation.



"Is it any business of yours?" demanded Miss Dudevaut. "I shan't go till I know what Lady Violet meant by such a speech as that."

"I think—I am sure my lady would prefer not to see you again," said the little governess, with mingled timidity and coldness.

"Has she told you so?" exclaimed Miss Dudevaut. "No, miss."

"I'll wait till she does, then, if you please; and I'll trouble you to remember that I was to have married poor Lord Eaglescliffe if he had lived. I don't know what dear Violet could mean by saying I had killed him, when I loved him so."

Her voice died in sobs. Miggs made her no answer, but hurried back to Lady Violet, who did not seem to have stirred since she left her.

The discomfited plotter continued her way to her own apartments in bitterness and humiliation of spirit. Her brilliant prospects had all come to a terrible nought. She had herself wrought their destruction, and even Sparks had no sympathy for her.

A little before noon the following day, Miggs came to her door. She brought the two notes—the one received by the earl that fatal morning, and Sparks' love-letter. The two told the story. But there was also half-a-dozen stern words from Lady Violet:

"Eaglescliffe cannot shelter another night my father's murderers."

"The countess desired me to say to you that a carriage would be in waiting to take you to the train this evening at six o'clock," Miggs said, coldly.

Miss Dudevaut had shed gallons of tears in the course of the morning, alternating her fits of weeping with getting in a passion with her maid, and had ended by flinging herself among the sofa cushions.

She raised herself up from the sicken pillow now, like a snake coiling itself for the fatal spring.

"Tell the Countess of Eaglescliffe," she said, sharply, thrusting her tangled hair back from her swollen face, "that I hasten hence to London, but not at her bidding. I go to set the officers of justice upon the track of her felon husband. She cannot hide him at the Cliffe any longer."

Having delivered herself of this farewell shot, Beatrice lay down again a good deal frightened at her own temerity; and from that time till she was safe away she did nothing but quiver and turn cold at every strange sound.

Conway met her at the station, just as she was beginning to recover her courage somewhat. It was with some difficulty she kept herself from screaming outright as she saw him.

"Don't be a fool," he said, roughly; "I'm not an escaped convict. I was only playing off on you. I have had a pardon."

Beatrice regarded him incredulously. She had almost rather he had threatened to shoot her.

"Sorry, eh?" he said, with a sneer. "You rather overshot yourself about the old earl, didn't you? It's the luck for me. Lady Violet and I will come in for everything now. There's enough of it to make up for some things—oh, Miss Dudevaut?"

Beatrice turned her back upon him, whereupon he laughed audibly.

Miggs took back Miss Dudevaut's insolent message faithfully. She didn't know what else to do, poor soul.

The young countess heard her through.

"Will you go and send Turner to me?" she said, without other remark.

Miggs hesitated. The faithful little woman disliked and feared the false valet instinctively.

"My dear," she whispered, "it's a great liberty, I know; but I'm sure Turner is not a man to be trusted."

"So am I, you silly Miggs. Now go and send him here directly."

Conway came at once, receiving the news of Beatrice's belligerent intentions with great equanimity. He was thinking far more of her, the splendour of whose loveliness grief only veiled, of her whose near presence fired his base cold blood like wine.

"Miss Dudevaut is welcome to do her worst," he said. "I am not what she thinks I am: I have been gardened."

Lady Violet started, and into her eyes came an expression of mingled horror, contempt, and anger.

"I see," she said; "you made it up between you. It was infamous—but worthy both."

Conway's swarthy face flushed like fire.

"No, by—," he checked himself on the verge of a frightful oath, and added more calmly: "Is it likely? Would she threaten me if we were confederates?"

"Go!" answered Lady Violet, frigidly. "He whose death you caused between you is not buried yet."

Conway stood still.

"Not till you say you believe me," he said, between sullenness and entreaty.

My lady stood looking at him a moment. Then she went and sat down with her back to him.

Conway waited a little, grinding his teeth. Then, muttering, "She always defeats me," he opened the door and departed.

# CHAPTER XXV.

LORD EAGLESCLIFFE was buried with all the honours due to a nobleman of his proud house.

His daughter bore herself through all that trying time with singular fortitude and composure, declining gently, but with firmness, all attempts to console with her.

"No one can sympathise with me, for no one knows what I have lost," she said to Lady Evelyn, with respectful decision, and in the same quiet but resolved manner, rejected her ladyship's offer to remain at Eaglescliffe with her a few days after all was over.

"I prefer to be alone; indeed, it is better that I should be alone," she explained to the kind and warm-hearted countess, who reluctantly yielded the point, but went away with an old conviction strengthened, namely, that Lady Violet was a most extraordinary and eccentric girl.

"She thinks badly of me now," thought my lady, having read the countess's thoughts in her face, but she will think worse before we meet again. I couldn't have her and Conway here at the same time."

At that very moment, the ex-convict was lurking in the room he thought the young countess was most likely to visit, if she entered any beside the drawing-room and her own private apartments. Lord Eaglescliffe's library had been a favourite resort with himself and his daughter; and it was here, half shrouded by the heavy ruby and gold draperies of one of the tall windows, that Conway lay in wait for the haughty girl he could not muster courage to summon authoritatively to an interview. Perhaps he guessed from his knowledge of her that she would not have come at such bidding.

It resulted, as he had been half-hoping, half-fearing; for no man, not even he could encounter the fearful lightning of my lady's big black eyes unscathed. The door opened noiselessly, and the young countess glided into the room.

She did not see him at first, and stood looking gravely about her some moments.

She wore a black dress, unrelieved by the slightest ornament, and her hair was dressed in the plainest manner, but nothing could impair the lustre of her wonderful beauty.

It was easy to guess what thoughts moved her, as her glance wandered over each familiar object, till it fell on Conway. Then it stopped, and she murmured:

"I thought the air seemed heavy."

And advancing haughtily, said:

"Well?"

Conway stirred uneasily in his seat, but only bowed without speaking.

"We are well met," continued she. "I was about to send for you."

He threw up his head desperately. What a spirit the girl had, and what a coward she made of him the moment she looked at him.

"You wished to speak with me?" he asked. "I am happy to be at your service."

He spoke almost humbly; so nearly so, that she regarded him with a doubtful glance.

He had doffed his servant's attire too, and wore a gentleman's plain dress suit.

She knitted her brows over the change, as she said slowly:

"I have a proposition to make to you. We will be divorced, and I will cede to you the half of the fortune left me—one hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds."

"My lady, you and I may as well understand each other. It is my wife I want, not her money. I will have nothing less."

"I will give you the whole—a quarter of a million."

"No."

"You might marry some gentle, sweet woman, who knew nothing of the past, and would worship you as tender wives sometimes do their husbands."

"And you might marry the gallant captain," he answered, with sudden passion. "It won't do, Lady Violet."

The perfect face took a deeper pallor, but she spoke as quietly as before:

"I will pledge myself not to marry Captain Evelyn."

"No!" and he faced her with a dark and desperate look. "You persist in treating me as though I were absolutely devoid of the commonest emotions of my kind. There is not a man in all England would give you up, were he in my place. Men, beside whose goodness I am black, would turn villains in my place

sooner than resign you. Do you think because I have been to Australia and back again—do you think because I have worked with a chain gang, and herded with thieves and murderers, that I am incapable of that soft madness with which your beauty would fire the brain of any man not a stone?"

"You are as eloquent as ever," said my lady, coldly, but with no sarcasm either of voice or manner; "unfortunately, however, I am six years older than I was when with just such talk you lured me to that act of folly which has darkened all my life since; and finally sent my father to the grave before his time."

"Have I not suffered too? You loved me then, Lady Violet," he persisted, calling all those old matchless powers of pleading to his aid.

"And I do not love you now," she answered, quietly.

"Some women would have loved me better for my misfortune."

"Yes; and some women would have loved you in spite of your guilt. I am constituted differently. I know who struck down Captain Evelyn that morning in the wood. But for a miracle, as it were, you would have been a murderer."

That was a home thrust, most cruel and unexpected. The dark face of the man turned of an ashy pallor, through which the long scar which crossed his face shone a livid streak.

"My lady," he stammered, and stopped; his voice broke on those two words.

To do him justice, it was not guilt that unsteadied his tones so much as standing the convicted villain he was in her eyes.

Unconsciously Lady Violet was avenging some of the women whose hearts this man had broken.

The young countess watched him with an unchanging face.

"I don't think you had better try to deny it to me," she said. "I made Captain Evelyn describe his assailant as well as he could from the glimpse he had of him. My only wonder is that he has not himself recognised you. Now, what is your price for going and leaving me in peace?"

"I deny everything, and I won't go. I love you, and you're my wife, and I won't give you up."

"I deny that I am your wife by any law of Heaven," she said, in low, measured tones. "I want to the altar to wed a man whose honour was above reproach, whose soul was pure of taint. You had made me believe in my childishness that you were such. You have no more right to demand of me fulfilment of the obligations incurred through such deceit, than you had to exact the money on Lord Evelyn's forged signature."

"I do demand them, nevertheless," he cried, flinging the long black hair off his scowling brow, and stung to madness almost by her contemptuous, bitter words. "I will surrender my right to you when the heavens fall, not before."

"You will surrender much sooner than that, or I am mistaken," she answered, calmly. "I advise you to consider well the offer I have made you, for it will not await your acceptance long."

And just bending her haughty head, she swept from the room, and left him to foam in impotent rage.

Outside, an angry laugh parted her lips.

"As well expect the heavens to fall as me to yield. He ought to know that," she murmured.

Conway stayed glaring at the door which had closed behind her.

"I was a fool," he murmured, "to hold my hand, when I had Evelyn here in my power—I, who believe in neither a God nor a conscience. A million curses on his handsome face, for that it is which stands between me and her."

The glitter of a horrible smile broke over his face, as he stood still in the middle of the room.

"I should like," he whispered, "to come upon him as he lay dying, and tell in his failing ear something that he would be willing to sell his soul now to hear. That would be revenge."

His cheeks were suffused with colour, his eyes glowed dangerously.

"It's only a question of pluck, after all," he muttered again, after a long pause. "She must yield in the end if I am bold enough, and I am when she taunts me so. If bad comes to worse—"

He drew from some concealment about his person a tiny casket of ebony, curiously wrought in figures of gold. It opened with a spring. Within it was first a gold, then a crystal flask inside the gold one. The last contained the drug of which he had told Eleanor Lyle.

Conway always carried this about him. Knowing, as he did, its fatal properties, even he had never had the courage to use it but twice—once upon a convict enemy in Australia (the poor wretch's blood-curdling ravings rang in his ears yet, sometimes), and once, in a very slight degree, upon Eleanor Lyle.

He was in the library again the following day, about the same hour, when a footman came with a card for Lady Violet.

"Some one said she was in here. Have you seen her, Turner?" he asked.

Conway frowned. The man's familiarity irritated him.

"She isn't here," he answered. "Whose card is that?"

"Captain Evelyn's."

On the impulse of the moment he snatched it and wrote hastily:

"I forbid you to see this man who would entice you from your duties to your husband."

There were envelopes upon the table. He took one, enclosed the card, sealed, and directed it.

"Give her that," he said, authoritatively.

The footman stared.

"What do you take me for?" he cried, tearing off the envelope again.

"What have you there, Simmonds?" asked Lady Violet's calm voice, suddenly, close beside him, and at the same moment she took the card.

Fortunately, perhaps, for her she had been passing that way, and heard Conway's charge to the man.

She glanced at the words traced upon the card. Not a feature changed. Only a faint glow broke over each white cheek.

She checked Simmonds' protestations gently.

"It shall be attended to, Mr. Turner," she said, and moved away in the direction of the western drawing-room, as Conway saw, looking after her.

Once she glanced back, haughtily as a queen might, to see if he dared follow her, and the look she surprised on his wicked face made her blood creep with a nameless chill.

Conway, indeed, took a forward step to follow her, but, thinking better of it, remained where he was.

"She's just in the mood to dare me out," he said to himself; "and in case she did that before Evelyn, he might suspect how matters really were. Be patient, Conway, my man, your turn shall come."

Lady Violet passed swiftly to the apartment in which her lover waited. Yes, her lover; for he loved her as men never love but one woman; and she—a wilder than ever thrill of hate and aversion for Conway shot across her as her glance fell on that dark, passionate face. It was the first time they had met since before her father's death, and the emotion which was struggling in the hearts of each could not be kept wholly from speaking in their countenances.

All the woman rose in the soul of the young countess as she stood, a moment, her hand locked in his, her own eyes downcast, to hide the tumult of her soul; her lips were trembling in spite of all her efforts to still them. It was he who first broke the silence, as he led her with tender respect to a seat.

"I come," he said, "from Lady Evelyn, bearing her entreaties that you will come to The Nest for a few weeks."

The tears rushed into Lady Violet's eyes; but she forced them back.

"It is out of the question for me to leave the Cliffe at present," she said; "but I am none the less grateful to her ladyship for her thoughtful kindness. Will you assure her how thoroughly I appreciate her invitation, while it is impossible for me to accept it? I am not alone, you know; my dear Miss Miggs kindly remains with me."

Captain Evelyn's countenance showed the keenness of his disappointment, and as she met his glance of mingled sadness and reproach, that longing for another strength than her own to lean upon, which is so purely a feminine characteristic, almost overpowered her.

"Ah, if I only dared appeal to him!" she thought. "But even to let him linger here is like inviting that bad man's malice to strike him."

And then, with a sharper pang, she remembered the look she had last seen on Conway's face, and felt that for Captain Evelyn's sake, as well as her own, for every reason, it was best that he should not come to the Cliffe any more.

It was the hardest thing she had done yet to tell him so. It was harder to meet, unmoved, his glance of mingled anger and reproach.

He rose proudly.

"I did not mean to intrude," he said. "I knew it was very soon, but I thought as such a near friend of your father's, I might venture—"

She interrupted him.

"Indeed, it is not that—it is no intrusion; I beg you not to think of it;" and the proud girl, already terribly shaken, with difficulty repressed her tears.

"Why, then— But I have no right to question you," he said, with stern humility. "As ever, your will is my law; and in parting, I can only regret whatever has been amiss in me in the past—"

"Nothing has been amiss," she interrupted him again, vehemently. "You have never done aught

that my heart and my conscience did not alike approve. I honour you above all men. Once—yes, I will acknowledge it to you—once, to have been your wife would have been the highest bliss earth could have offered."

She paused, her voice stifled in emotion—and he advanced impetuously, his brown eyes flashing with eagerness, his hands extended.

"Now?" he questioned.

She drew back a step, with a glance of unutterable melancholy and regret.

"Oh, Violet, try me, only try me! If man can win you, I will—the ordeal whatever it may!"

"Would to Heaven you might!" she said, almost without volition. "But it may not be. Believe me, dear, dear friend, it may not be. Go, and forget that one lives so unworthy the love of a noble heart as Violet of Eaglescliffe."

"I will go," he said; "but not to forget you. I could not if I tried; and I shall not try. As to unworthiness, if any one else had said to me what you have just said, he or she should speak no more to Gilderoy Evelyn."

My lady drew her breath sharply as she extended her hand.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "We will not forget each other."

He left her at last, his heart sore, his brain bewildered.

Conway was waiting for him at a turn in the shrubbery, which hid them from the west drawing-room windows. He had contrived to overhear the most of the conversation between him and Lady Violet.

With his hat slouched over his face, the ex-convict—the whilom valet—stepped out into the path, and asked humbly enough if he might have a few words with him.

Evelyn paused with secret irritation, which was not lessened when he saw who it was. He had never liked his lordship's man Turner. He concealed his annoyance, however, and waited patiently for him to speak.

Turner shot a sharp glance about him; then he pulled off his hat, and flung his long black hair off his face with that defiant gesture with which the reader is already familiar.

"You ought to know me, Gil," he said, familiarly, addressing him by an abbreviation of their boyhood, and turning himself full to the light.

Gilderoy Evelyn started violently.

"Conway!" he exclaimed, interrogatively, amazed almost depriving him of the power of utterance.

The next instant his face was turned of a livid whiteness. Conway, the felon, back at Eaglescliffe in disguise? Could Lady Violet know of his presence there?

The ex-convict almost read his thoughts.

"I'm not an escaped man," he said. "I've got the Queen's pardon in my pocket. It's worth while being on the right side of the women, Gil. I shouldn't be here to-day if my wife had not persevered and got me a pardon."

"Your wife?" exclaimed the guardsman, like one in a dream.

"My wife," repeated Conway, with slow distinctness. "Violet, Countess of Eaglescliffe, has been my wife since long before that little trip of mine across the sea."

He could not look at the man to whom he was lying so horribly as he said the infamous words. He looked anywhere but at him.

Hence it was that when the impetuous guardsman's clenched fist, shot out straight from his shoulder in that first surprised moment, he was totally unprepared for the blow which felled him like an ox.

Gilderoy Evelyn spurned him with his foot as he lay there insensible. Then casting one wild, pale glance in the direction of the Cliffe, he plunged away to where a groom waited with his horse, mounted, and rode homeward as though a thousand furies had been on his track.

It was some moments after he came to himself before Conway could realise where he was or what had happened. He rose to his feet, his lips white, his look that of a half-maddened brute.

"You didn't know at whose expense you struck me, my fine captain," he growled. "I'll have it out of her first, then look out for yourself, sir."

He fairly raved at the mouth as he mounted the marble steps that conducted to the western terrace, and trampling rudely through a magnificent parterre, just brought from the conservatories, entered the drawing-room where he had left Lady Violet.

She was not there; and with the same vicious look he proceeded to the very door of her private apartments, where he knocked loudly.

Fidele opened the door angrily; and when she saw his inflamed face, retreated in a fright, screaming:

"It's Turner, my lady; and he's drunk!"

Lady Violet arose from a couch upon which she had been lying before the open window, and stood in haughty anger and amazement.

Conway stopped, scowling darkly, but advancing no farther than the few steps he had already come past the threshold.

"I will be put off no longer," he said, in a sullen voice; "I will be outraged and insulted where I ought to be master no longer."

Lady Violet's lip curled.

"You are not master in these apartments, at least," she uttered, scornfully. "You will be good enough to retire from them at once."

"Not till we have come to an understanding," he said, seating himself on a velvet-upholstered chair, with an air of dogged resolution.

Lady Violet's outstretched hand touched the bell rope.

"If you do not go this instant I will summon every menial in the house to thrust you out."

He was already cooler, and he saw the execution of the threat in her blazing eyes.

"If you will listen to me one moment," he began, more respectfully.

"Not one word. I gave you the last and only conditions upon which I will treat with you, yesterday."

"You defy me, then, utterly?"

"Utterly so," coiling the bell rope about her hand.

"Ring that bell and every lackey at the Cliffe shall know what are our relations," he declared, doggedly.

Lady Violet's delicate nostrils dilated in the rage and agony of momentary hesitation, while he added: "I have already told your handsome guardsman. I stopped him on his way out."

Before the words had well left his lips, the bell clashed such a peal as brought every man and woman within sound of it to their feet.

Conway heard them coming, and quitted the room. My lady was victor once more.

"What shall I tell them, my lady?" questioned Fidele, as the head cook and one of the footmen presented themselves.

"Tell them anything you like, so you send them about their businesses," responded the countess, sharply.

"Shall I order Turner driven from the Cliffe?"

"No!"

"I will say he was drunk, then, and frightened you; but that, in consideration of his late relations with his lordship—"

"Go out of the room; I wish to be alone. Stop. I'm cross, but I'm not cross with you, Fidele. I suppose you understand that?"

Fidele dropped one of her pretty French curtsies and departed, murmuring:

"As if I didn't know that." And she added, "I can mind my own business too; and I'll see that other people do the same."

That was the way my lady charmed even the servants of her caprices into obedience.

"Ah, ciel!" Fidele used to say sometimes, "such a temper. But such sweetness."

If Conway could have heard the little speech Mademoiselle Fidele made to the servants concerning him, he might have been tempted more strongly than he was to do as he had threatened Lady Violet he would.

But in truth he did not dare. Indeed, his schemes began to look more and more difficult of accomplishment. He knew well enough that his claims upon the proud patrician girl would not stand any very sharp legal criticisms.

He had serious thoughts of getting up his own certificate of marriage. But, naturally, after going to Australia for forgery, he had an aversion to exerting his talents in that direction.

He resolved to make one more effort with Lady Violet. He conveyed to her in writing his final propositions. He gave her the choice of herself avowing their relation to each other, or submitting to have him do so.

My lady's reply was as tantalising as it was characteristic. The Countess of Eaglescliffe declined emphatically to concern herself with Mr. Turner's affairs. She had no objection to his exerting his own great natural eloquence in the establishment of his proposition, as presented to her, but she was of the opinion he would find other people, even his fellow servants, both as sceptical and as hostile to his pretensions, as he had Captain Evelyn.

Miggs had been fortunate enough to be an unseen witness of that encounter, and the allusion to it was the last drop of gall and wormwood to Conway.

"I shall get to hate you directly, my lady," he muttered, as he read her note. "I wish I could; I should work without any scruples to hamper me then."

(To be continued.)





[THE NEW HOME.]

# THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

## CHAPTER LII.

"Now, ladies, you must pardon me if I leave you," said Mr. Smilesot, rising. "I shall be here with the carriage at seven."

"Oh, do not go, but remain with us to tea," pleaded Miss Angelina.

"You overwhelm me with favours," murmured Mr. Smilesot, with a grand flourish; "but I must gratefully decline."

"Now, Mr. Smilesot," said Miss Seraphina, with coquettish menace and pouting her lips; "if you do not remain I will never speak—"

"I beg you not to utter any rash vows," cried Mr. Smilesot, starting forward, throwing out his hands, and assuming an expression of interested alarm. "I really hope, my dear Miss Seraphina, that you will not."

"But I will," she rejoined, lifting her forefinger warningly, and tossing her curls, "if you do not consent. Now what do you say?"

Mr. Smilesot clasped his hands over his heart, bowed very low, and while an insipid smile nearly obscured his eyes and elevated his lips towards his cheeks, he answered in low, soft tones:

"Oh, what bliss it is to receive commands from one so fair, and I, being but mortal, cannot resist the music of your voice."

And as a fitting conclusion to his shallow speech, he kissed his hand, and bowed very low. In recovering himself, however, his foot struck the puddle, who for the last few moments had been scampering about the floor.

"K-i-ki! yap!" came from the canine lungs, and the animal commenced a vigorous attack upon Mr. Smilesot's pants.

"Confound the puppy!" exclaimed the gentleman, dancing upon one foot and then on the other; "I wish he was in—yes—in better humour."

"Clumsy lout!" muttered Miss Seraphina. "I'd thank you to—" she remembered herself, and added mildly: "Fanny is very naughty. Come, Fanny, come."

The poodle ceased his attack, and jumped into the outstretched arms of his mistress.

Mr. Smilesot surveyed the extremities of his broadcloth, ascertaining that no damage had been done, and passing his handkerchief across his brow, smiled again, and remarked:

"Hope you'll pardon me, Miss Seraphina; had no idea that the little dev—ahem, dear was near. I must have appeared very ridiculous; but such things will occur—"

"Say no more, Mr. Smilesot," simpered Miss Seraphina. "It is rather my place to ask your pardon. Fanny has behaved very bad lately; I shall have to whip her."

"Oh, no, no; I beg that you will not," said Mr. Smilesot, regaining his composure. "I could not bear to think of it, for she loves you so much; it is really very affecting."

"I should say it was," interposed Alice, ironically. "What a noble Christian spirit yours is," said Miss Angelina, glancing timidly at the gentleman.

Mr. Smilesot looked around to see that the dog was not within range, and again bowed low; then with a fawning air, he observed:

"Ah, thank you, ladies. Now, my dear Miss Angelina, I have a request to make; will you be so very kind as to read me some extracts from your poetical works?"

"Oh, yes; do, dear," lisped Miss Seraphina.

A broad smile played over Alice's features.

Miss Angelina partially closed her eyes, referred to the modesty of genius, and after a half-hour's conversation upon the subject, adjourned to her room, brought forth a few pages of manuscript, and after falsifying considerably in explaining why it was not published, seated herself, and proceeded to read some miserable, trashy rhymes, which I have too much regard for the refined tastes of my readers to repeat.

During the time Alice glided from the apartment unperceived, and sought her own room, where she remained until they departed for the theatre, much preferring a cup of tea and a bit of cake in solitude, to the regular meal and its accompanying volumes of nonsense.

At eight o'clock she again entered the drawing-room, and seating herself in an arm-chair, endeavoured to fix her attention upon a book.

A few moments passed, when suddenly the gas flickered and went nearly out. She started in mingled wonder and apprehension. What could it be? And yet it was not an uncommon occurrence in winter—but! She reversed her train of thought by a powerful exercise of her will, arose, ignited two other burners, and again resumed her seat, and tried to quiet her mind by perusing her book.

But it was fruitless; a vague fear oppressed her, and her attempts to banish it only increased it. At intervals she glanced timorously around, and then looked upon her book, but only for a moment, and

again her eyes wandered about the room, which seemed to grow more lonely and ominously still.

Once more the gas was almost extinguished, and with a cry of alarm Alice sprang from her chair and darted towards the door.

Ere she reached it a heavy hand was pressed against her mouth, her arms were pinioned, and while terror sent chilling shivers over her frame, she stood panting for breath, her eyes sending forth gleams of fright, and her heart wildly beating.

Out from the semi-darkness, in a gruff, angry voice came the words:

"Dare to whisper and you die!"

In mute though thrilling tones a cry went forth from that trembling maiden's heart to the Father of all; then, while her limbs bent beneath her, and horror caused her flesh to quiver, she was dragged towards the door; and at her side that grim, dark form: and on her wrists those cruel, vice-like fingers were clasped; and across her pallid cheek came gusts of hot breath; and on—on she went! but where?

A moment of awful, portentous silence! and then, with resounding crash, the folding-doors were thrown apart—a man leaped into the room—the gas was let on, until the flame rose high and illumined the apartment with a dazzling glare, while its crackling and hissing added to the terrible grandeur of the scene, and beneath it, with his white eyes emitting sparks of anger, stood Christopher Dikely.

An instant he gazed upon the girl; then, with a bound, he placed himself at her side, drew back his arm, and sent it with crashing force against the head of her captor, who fell insensible to the floor.

"Oh, thank Heaven!" murmured Alice, in a tremulous voice, and clung to his arm, while her pale, sweet face was raised in mute thankfulness.

"Come, my child," said Dikely, drawing her to him, and moving towards a chair; "you must sit down and get composed."

She dropped into the chair mechanically, was silent a moment, and then, while a tender light beamed from her eyes, she lowly said:

"This is the second time you have saved me; oh, how!—tell me how I can thank you?"

He glanced cautiously around, drew a revolver from his pocket, held it in his right hand, ready for instant use, and kindly answered:

"By having confidence and no fear."

Then, as he was bending over the chair, and gazing into her lovely face, a form glided snakelike and silently upon him from the rear. Anon, another as quickly and quietly approached from behind the sofa, and with a glance of hatred moved towards him.

And still strangely entranced by those fair young features, and deterred from exercising his usual vigilance by the mild tones of that voice, he heeded not what was passing around him.

"We are perfectly safe, now—are we not?" she timidly asked.

"Do not fear, Alice," he smilingly replied; "the gentleman lies very comfortably near the door."

A very faint smile wreathed her features at the characteristic answer, and she continued:

"Oh, I wish I knew who my enemies are—why I am thus pursued—why my life is so strange!"

She waited a moment for a reply, but none came; and then, while her face grew pale, she turned her eyes towards the spot where he had stood. He was not there!

With many apprehensive thoughts agitating her mind, she tremulously arose and looked around. Her hands involuntarily came together; her eyes dilated with dismay, and she stood rigid.

There upon the floor lay the heroic Dikely—his form insensate—and those lips, which but a moment ago had spoken cheering words to the imperilled girl, now mute; while bending over him, and adjusting a pair of handcuffs to his wrists, was a large, powerful man, of grizzly beard and evil eye.

As the full realisation of her terrible and lonely position rushed upon her mind, a fearful tremor pervaded her physical system—her face became the hue of snow, and, with a shriek of mingled grief and despair, she reeled and fell.

At that instant a man sprang toward her, caught her in his arms, and gazing upon her pallid face, coarsely muttered:

"My fine lady, you're safe this time."

Presently Dikely opened his eyes. As he saw his manacled hands an expression of blended rage and mortification passed over his features, and compressing his lips, he gathered his limbs, elevated his body, and by a most powerful muscular effort, in a moment he stood upon his feet, with his captor at his side, and the man whom he had first struck holding the knife at his throat. He was conducted through the hall to the outside door; while slowly following, and supported by the arm of the third villain, came the gentle Alice, who had only sufficiently recovered from her syncope to experience a faint realisation of her danger, which from its very bewilderment was all the more terrible.

Dikely made no resistance nor spoke a word, but very quietly entered the carriage which stood at the kerb, and in which, a moment after, the lovely heiress was also placed; and the two miscreants having entered, and assumed their respective positions at the side of their prisoners, and the third having mounted the box, the word was given, and at a reckless rate of speed the horses dashed onward.

The motion of the carriage aroused Alice to a full sense of her position, and as she turned her eyes upon the rough, brutal man at her side, and felt that she was in his power, her very being seemed to quiver, and while an expression of horror and loathing rested upon her face, she shrank from him, and nestled close to the side of the carriage, hardly daring to breathe.

"Come, my beauty," growled one of the men, with a wicked grin, "we stop here."

Her power of action seemed suspended, and she moved not, but gazed upon him in blended fear and entreaty.

"Did you hear?" he wrathfully exclaimed, as he clutched her by the arm. "Come, I say; this fainting business is played out," and he lifted her by sheer strength to her feet, and pushed open the carriage door.

As she left the carriage she cast a glance of sorrow toward Dikely, which sent the blood like lightning through his veins, and caused his teeth to meet with a clash; but his strong arms, alas! were pinioned, and he could not help her.

Alice turned her head. The carriage had gone. She must obey; she was alone and unprotected; she must go; and with trembling heart she walked along by his side.

Then the tears, which up to this time she had bravely restrained, burst from her eyes, and increased, until they rolled in streams down her cheeks.

"Stop your crying," commanded the man, "and take a look at your new home—nice, ain't it?"

She raised her eyes, and by the flickering lights saw a rickety building, whose timbers were black, and looked as if they might have originally belonged to a distillery. The windows boasted not more than three whole panes of glass to a sash, and were dingy and defaced, while the door was battered and soiled.

"Oh, Heaven! must I enter here?" was the thought which gave keen suffering to her heart, and seemed to weaken her mind; but she had not time to

dwell upon it, for her companion drew her roughly to the door, gave a peculiar knock, and it was immediately opened, but no one was in sight.

Silently they passed upstairs, through an elevated causeway which connected with another house, and then down again, and they entered a small meagrely furnished room.

In the middle of the apartment, with one bare, brawny arm resting upon the table at her side, sat a bold-featured female, whose face was made to look actually frightful by the loss of the sight of one eye, and the other being crossed, while her mouth was very large, with thick, overhanging, bluish lips, and four tusk-like teeth.

With a cry of horror Alice shrank back, and threw out her hands imploringly.

"Och, thin, be the darlint afear o' me?" mumbled the female with a grin, which made her positively hideous. "Arrah! bless the pony face on yez, but I'd niver be afther hurtin' ye, so I wouldn't!"

"Oh, take me away—take me away!" moaned Alice, pressing her hands to her throbbing temples. "I cannot breathe here, the air chokes me!"

The man heeded not her words, but advanced to the female, pressed some coins into her hand, and then said:

"Treat Jennie well, mind now."

"Arrah, then, I'll do that same," rejoined the virago, bubbling her head; "the dear creature shall be nursed like a bairn, so she shall, niver fear o' me!"

The man muttered a few words and left the room.

Alice drew her hands from her face, and gazed around the miserable room with its begrimed walls, its scanty, greasy furniture, and then at the red, bloated, uncouth face of the mammoth female, who sat with her giant arms a-kimbo, and her features contorted into a revolting grin.

The sight was productive of the most intense mental pain; and sinking upon a rude stool, the heiress wept bitterly, while at intervals choking sobs welled up from her perturbed breast.

The virago arose, and while a look—which she intended for sympathy—distorted her features, she advanced towards the beautiful girl, and muttered:

"Now don't be afther cryin' the swate eyes out of yez, don't fear o' me, me darlint; I'll be a-mither to yez, so I will," and she essayed to take her hand.

With a shriek of loathing Alice darted to the extreme end of the room, and with pallid face, and eyes gleaming with mingled scorn, anger, and supplication, she tremulously ejaculated:

"Away; lay not your polluted hands upon me! Oh, Heaven! let me die; death were better than living here!"

#### CHAPTER LIII.

In a proscenium box at the right of the stage, sat Miss Angelina and her beautiful companion, while between them was the affable Mr. Smilessoft, who smiled at intervals from one to the other, and made many remarks concerning the play, to which the happy ladies volubly replied, and to the great annoyance of those near them, who desired to hear the words of the actors rather than the insipid observations of the silly spinster.

Yes, Miss Angelina, was in a tremour of delight. A proscenium box, with the representatives of the fashionable world for neighbours! Glory! glory! what an immortal honour! Thus she thought, and accordingly straightened herself up and assumed extra airs and graces, sufficient for a line of queens. She gave but little attention to the play, the fact of occupying a proscenium box engrossed her mind, and she determined upon her arrival home to compose a poem in honour of it.

As the third act closed and the curtain rolled down, Mr. Smilessoft begged to be excused; and although the ladies protested that time would pass slowly, in fact, stand still, until his return, yet they allowed him to pass out.

He had no sooner closed the door than Miss Angelina drew nearer to her friend, elevated her nose, and soothingly said:

"He's gone to get a glass of wine, you may be sure of it."

"I should think you'd be ashamed, Angelina!" answered Miss Seraphina, indignantly; "you are unjust, and there's no gratitude in you."

"Humph!" sniffed Miss Angelina; "so you are going to stand up for him, are you?"

"I will tell you," replied Miss Seraphina, with more than her usual firmness, "I am not going to asperse the character of a man who has thus far treated us with respect and politeness."

Miss Angelina rolled her eyes upward, and continued, in a milder tone:

"Lor, Seraphina! you've fallen in love with Mr. Smilessoft! A great woman you are to belong to the League."

"Bother the League!" returned Miss Seraphina, impatiently; "it's all nonsense. We might as well

drop our false colours; you know there are not two women in the world who make bigger fools of themselves in the presence of men than you and I do. Stop, now! hold your tongue, and hear me out. You know the League is only composed of crabbled old maids, disaffected married women, and ignorant and talentless blue-stockings like you. Hold your tongue, I say! I don't care if I am exposing the secrets of the League; and I am tired of it; and what's more, I'll have nothing more to do with it!"

"I don't know any such thing!" averred Miss Angelina, with a toss of her head. "I should think you were crazy, and I guess you are; your talk is ridiculous!"

"Perhaps it is; but it is true, nevertheless," responded Miss Seraphina, resolutely; "and the only reason I've made a fool of myself, crying down the other sex, is because one of its members has jilted me. I should have been more of a woman if I had been married!" and the expression of her face became actually tender.

Miss Angelina looked upon her in wonder, and ejaculated:

"Well, it's not so with me. I wouldn't have been married if forty thousand had asked me; no, I wouldn't!"

And Miss Angelina pursed up her lips, and looked very defiant.

"Nonsense," said Miss Seraphina, curtly.

"What do you mean, Seraphina?" snarled Miss Angelina, leaning forward. "Do you accuse me of uttering a falsehood?"

"Yes; if you say that!" rejoined Miss Seraphina with assurance, cool and calm.

The muscles of Miss Angelina's thin face twitched nervously, her eyes flashed; and stamping her foot, she angrily muttered:

"You impostor! This is all I got for boarding you for years, is it, you—"

"Why, dear me! what do I hear?" articulated Mr. Smilessoft, who at that moment re-entered, and now stood with hands split and eyes and mouth wide open.

Miss Seraphina turned her head and giggled behind her fan at her friend's discomfiture.

Miss Angelina looked at the act-drop, the orchestra, the chandelier, coughed several times, and finally turned to Mr. Smilessoft with a bland smile and observed:

"You are astonished? To-he-he! No wonder. You don't appreciate our little side-drama? Well, I will explain it to you. I was repeating to dear Seraphina the words of a very ill-tempered friend of mine, and trying to imitate her looks and gestures at the same time. You see, we have to resort to the simplest methods of diversion to fill the void occasioned by your absence."

"Ah, yes, certainly," answered Mr. Smilessoft; "do pardon my exclamation! If I had thought a moment I should have known that one of your proverbially kind and gentle disposition could never utter such words as those."

"I hope not," murmured Miss Angelina, with charming innocence.

Miss Seraphina had too much regard for her friend, despite the insult she had received, to expose her, and with a scornful air she gave her attention to the play.

It was evident from Miss Seraphina's words that the presence of the lovely Alice had not been without its effect, and that she was becoming cognisant of her injustice and folly, and wisely trying to make amends to her own conscience. Miss Seraphina, I will do her the justice to say, was not naturally virulent or vindictive, but disappointment, and the society of crabbled, poevish women had made her what she was.

Little was said during the last act, and in silence the party left the theatre.

After some refreshment, they entered their carriage.

"Why do we go this way?" queried Miss Angelina.

She had hardly ceased speaking ere the carriage came to a full stop—the door was thrown open, a man in the garb of a policeman hastily entered—the carriage went on, and before its inmates could recover from their astonishment, the intruder had affixed a pair of handcuffs to the wrists of the urban Mr. Smilessoft.

"What has he done? why do you do this?" cried Miss Angelina, in alarm.

"I have not time for questions, madam," replied the officer, with professional indifference; "give me your wrists."

"My wrists?" she gasped, sinking back upon the cushions. "Oh, what have I done?"

"I have my orders from my superintendent; all I am to do is to obey them."

And with these words he essayed to grasp her hands. But Miss Angelina, though much frightened and very pale, was resolved not to submit without a struggle, and the instant his hands descended she drew hers away, and used her nails vigorously,



and pulled his hair with an energy only equalled by women of her combative qualities.

"Whew!" muttered the policeman; "you can scratch like a cat; but I've had experience in that line, so don't excite yourself."

And quickly grasping her hands, he instantly adjusted the fetters.

With agitated mind and body quivering Miss Seraphina had witnessed these actions in blended terror and amazement; and now that the officer approached her she looked pleadingly into his face, and said, in a choked voice:

"Oh, why—why is this? I am innocent, my conscience is clear."

"I am very sorry," returned the officer, "but you know I can only do my duty; however, as you are not quite so tigerish as your companion, I will leave your wrists free, but you must not speak a loud word or make any noise."

"Oh, thank you; I will be very quiet," ejaculated Miss Seraphina, earnestly. "Thank Heaven, I have never yet been so disgraced!"

"Yes, you can talk," screamed Miss Angelina, indignantly; "you've got no handcuffs on your wrists. Mr. Smiles, why don't you knock that man down and protest the ladies who are with you?—you're no more spirit than a stewed rabbit! Oh, I wish—I wish—"

"My dear Miss Angelina," returned Mr. Smiles, in a voice somewhat astounded, "pray compose yourself. The officer has made a mistake, which will be rectified; we are all innocent; we have injured no one."

"And that's the worst of it!" sobbed Miss Angelina, shaking her head from side to side. "I wish I'd never seen you. This is the second time I've got into trouble by being with you."

"You are making too much noise," interposed the officer, sternly; "you must be more quiet, or I shall gag you!"

That one word dispelled her grief, and aroused her anger, and stamping both her feet, she cried:

"Gag a woman! that's just like your miserable sex—you assault cowards like Smiles, and attack women and children, you brute! Oh, if my hands were free, I'd scratch your eyes out—I would!"

The hand of the policeman was at that moment pressed, rather more violently than occasion required, over her mouth, but he did not long keep it there, for she fastened her teeth upon one of his fingers, and bit until he howled with pain, and begged her to let go.

"Now I feel better," she exclaimed, and her foot again stamped on the carriage floor; "and if ever you dare do that again, I'll bite it off, though I'm afraid I'm poisoned now, by taking the venomous thing in my mouth; and I wouldn't have done it, if I had thought."

An example of the consistency of some women.

"Angelina dear," said Miss Seraphina, in a soothing voice, though it trembled a little with fear, "please don't talk, it won't do any good, and may do harm. I am very nervous, do be quiet."

"No, I won't," exclaimed Miss Angelina, trembling with wrath; "I'll tell these puppies what I think of them. You're very brave, Mr. Smiles, ain't you?"

"But, dear Miss Angelina," interrupted that gentleman, "you must be reasonable. I have no power; my hands are fettered; and even if I could strike the officer, it would injure us all. I should be charged with assault, and it would add to our peril, and cover you with disgrace. I am innocent of any wrong, but the officer does not think so."

"Oh, of course, you've got some excuse," responded Miss Angelina, contemptuously. "I never saw a weak-minded man but had—you're afraid, you're a coward, that's what's the matter with you; and as to that officer, he's another, and neither of you are fit to drive a pig to market."

"Will you shut up?" muttered the officer, in a low voice of repressed anger.

"Do, Angelina, do keep still," pleaded Miss Seraphina in a choked voice.

"I won't, I say I won't!" she resentfully rejoined. "My tongue's my own, and I'll use it, unless you tie it, which would be just like you, you poltroon. I want to know where we are going—will any of you tell me?"

No reply was made, but the officer arose, drew the window curtain, and resumed his seat.

"That's nice," commented Miss Angelina, in sharp, ringing tones; "that's your style, you lords of creation, you gentlemen; you'd shut out the light of day from as poor women if you could, you mean, miserable things! I say, Mr. Smiles, do you know where you are going, or are you scared to death, you feeble old gigger?"

"There, that will do!"

And with these words the officer pressed a handkerchief to her nostrils, and she sunk back insensible.

Miss Seraphina saw the act, and it caused an undimmed dread to take possession of her mind, and she trembled visibly, but said nothing.

For fifteen minutes the carriage rattled on and then halted.

Miss Angelina, put to sleep by a powerful narcotic, had not yet awoken; but the officer lifted her slight form, and bore it from the carriage in his arms.

As Miss Seraphina stepped from the vehicle, she shuddered. Turning to Mr. Smiles, she apprehensively ejaculated:

"Oh, why are we here? Where are we going? Can you, will you tell me?"

"My dear Miss Seraphina," answered Mr. Smiles, with a show of trepidation and regret, "Heaven knows! Had I the least idea, I would willingly tell you; but I, alas! am as ignorant and fearful in regard to it as yourself."

At that instant the officer reappeared.

Miss Seraphina saw that his arms were empty, and while a terrible fear chilled her heart, she caught him by the sleeve, and gasped:

"What, oh, what have you done with her? Tell me!"

"Come, you shall see," he replied, and led the way to a kind of landing-pier—for they had been conveyed into the region of shipping and the docks—and pointed to a boat, in the stern of which reclined Miss Angelina, resting upon the arm of a sailor.

"Now, sir," exclaimed Mr. Smiles, very spiritingly, "I wish to know, and demand as my right, the reason of your bringing us here? This is no station-house; there is no law in this. Speak, sir, and quickly."

"I want you to shut up your mouth," said the officer, presenting a pistol.

Miss Angelina, who started up in bewilderment, passed her hand across her brow, and said in a low, terrified tone:

"Oh, I have had such a fearful dream. Who are you? Where am I?"

"Keep quiet, my lady," returned a kindly voice; "you are safe."

She said no more, but regarded those around her with a vacant stare. The excitement she had experienced, the sudden somnolence which had been forced by the narcotic, the reaction which had occurred under its influence had suggested frightful visions, had benumbed her mentally, and engendered considerable physical weakness; and on the quiet, subdued, pale-faced woman it would have been difficult to have found one trace of the virtuous spinster of a short time before.

"Oh, dear Angelina," cried Miss Seraphina, in a quivering voice, "what will become of us?"

Miss Angelina did not reply hastily or petulantly, but gazed meditatively upon the floor for a moment, and then slowly said, and in a tone which showed that she fully understood the peril of her position:

"I know not; we can only wait and hope. If life is spared to us, I hope we shall both try to improve our dispositions, and appreciate more fully the goodness of Heaven."

"Oh, how happy I am to hear you speak so!" responded Miss Seraphina, with deep sincerity; "even though it comes when we are in peril and danger."

Instantly the door opened, and Mr. Christopher Dikely, heavily ironed, entered the cabin. No expression of surprise dwelt upon his features as he saw them, only a slight movement of the muscles extending upward from the eyes showed that their presence was to him unexpected. Slowly he advanced to a seat, and gazed from one to the other in silence.

"O-h, and you are here too, Mr. Dikely!" exclaimed Miss Seraphina, in painful wonder. "What can this mean?"

"Really I have not the slightest idea," he rejoined, in his usual calm way.

Amazed at such utter indifference to peril, the ladies looked at each other and then at the person who sat opposite them, whose nonchalance, so contrary to human nature in general, was, from its very silence, almost ominous.

Presently the door again opened, and John Moran advanced into the room. When directly in front of them he paused; and while his eyes gleamed, and a diabolical smile of exultation parted his thick lips, he sneeringly ejaculated:

"Ha! ha! h-a-a! At last! H-a-a! You rascal! I've bagged you at last! You're plucky, however, I'll give you due credit; and may I swing from my own cross-trees if I don't give you something else!"

Dikely uttered no word, but the light in those strange eyes of his was portentous.

Moran advanced to Miss Angelina, and, while the smile increased until his evil features were distorted, he tauntingly cried:

"I've got you too, you hatchet-faced, snarling creature; and I'll make you sweet-tempered or keel-haul you—give me the cat if I don't. You needn't look so grave. I know what a tinder-box you are. Have now—let me hear you. You

won't? Well, I'll make you, then. I'm merry to-night, and—wouldn't you like to know where your heiress is, your pretty heiress? Ha! ha! h-a-a!"

(To be continued.)

## LEIGHTON HALL.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

What a state is guilt,  
When everything alarms it! Like a sentinel  
Who sleeps upon his watch, it wakes in dread,  
Even at a breath of wind. Scanderberg.

MAUDE SOMERTON had thrown her hat down in one place, her gloves and shawl in another, and donning her dressing-gown, stood by the open window of her room at Oakwood, looking out upon the beauty of the night, but thinking more of John and the words he said to her during their walk from Leighton, than of the silvery moonlight which lay so calmly upon the lawn below, and streaming through the window, fell upon the floor in a broad sheet of light.

They had walked slowly, lingeringly behind the others, and taking more time by half-an-hour to reach Oakwood than the rest of the party had done. John had felt the influence of the lovely night, and the witching spell of the sunny blue eyes, whose brightness he could see even through the moonlight whenever they were turned to meet his. And Maude was very quiet and gentle, and walked demurely at his side, with her little hand resting confidently upon his arm, while he told her first all the story of his love for Edna Churchill, and how he had outlived that love, as had been proved to him that night, when he could meet her face to face, and listen to her voice without a single heart-throb or regret for the decision she had made a year ago.

She would always seem very near to him, he said, always more like a sister than a stranger, but he had ceased to think of her as one who might some day be his. Then he told her of his comparative poverty, and of the little crippled Annie, who could only walk with crutches, and who must be his care so long as she should live. The Heyford name was a good and honourable one, he said, and never had been tarnished to his knowledge, and still there was in the family a shadow of disgrace, the nature of which he could not now explain to her; he could only say that he had had no part in it, and it could by no means affect him or his future. And then he asked her if, knowing what she did, she could consent to share his fortune with him, to be his wife, and a sister to little Annie, who suffered so much for want of other companionship than that of old Luna, who kept his house.

There was a spice of coquetry about Maude Somerton; it was as natural for her to flirt as it was to breathe; but there was something in honest John Heyford's manner which warned her that he was not the man to be trifled with. She could play with silly Ned Bannister and drive him nearly wild, and make even poor Uncle Philip Overton's heart beat so fast that the old man, who was mortally afraid of heart disease, had applied a sticking plaster to the region of inquietude; but she must be candid with John. She must tell him yes or no, without qualification of any kind, and so at last she answered "Yes;" and John, as he stooped to kiss her upturned face, on which the moonlight was shining, felt as if heaven had suddenly opened to his sight and let the glory through.

And thus they were betrothed, John Heyford and Maude; and they lingered for a few moments under the shadow of the eaves at Oakwood, and whispered anew their vows of love; and when John asked it of her, Maude put up her lips and kissed his handsome face, and let her arm linger about his neck, and then started back like a guilty thing, as the door came together with a bang, and she heard the click of the key turning in the lock. It was Georgie fastening up, but she opened the door again at John's call, looking sharply into their faces as they passed her, but saying nothing except, "I supposed everybody was in."

"Tell her, Maude," John said, as he ran up the stairs to his room, while Maude walked leisurely to her own chamber, in which there was a door communicating with Georgie's apartment.

The two girls never slept together, but frequently, when Maude was in a very irrepresible mood, or Georgie unusually amiable and patronising, they visited each other and talked together while disrobing for the night. Now, however, Maude felt more like communing with the moonlight, and whispering her happiness to the soft September wind, which just lifted her bright hair as she leaned from the window, than talking with her future sister-in-law, and she feigned not to hear the knock upon the door and Georgie's voice asking if she might come in. But when the knock was repeated, and the voice had in it a note of impatience, she opened the door, and Georgie came in, brush and

comb in hand, and her long black wavy hair rippling over her crimson dressing-gown, with its facings of rich satin. Everything Georgie wore was of the most becoming as well as expensive kind, and she made a very beautiful picture as she sat combing out and arranging her glossy curls under a silken net. But there was a stormy look in her black eyes as they watched Maude, who was also arranging her hair, combing it out in long combfules, and then letting it fall in shining masses across the sleeve of her white dressing-gown. There was a strange disquiet about Georgie to-night—a feeling of unrest and vain longings for the years gone for ever, the time when she was as young, and fresh, and pure as Maude Somerton standing there before her, or the girl at Leighton Place, who had so disturbed her equanimity, and of whom she had come to speak to Maude.

She found it hard, however, to begin, but at last made the plunge by saying:

"Maude, what about the young lady at Leighton? Who is she—that is, what is her real name?"

"Her real name?" and Maude opened her blue eyes wonderingly. "She is Miss Overton, Louise Overton. You have known that all the time. Why do you ask me so queer a question?"

"Maude, this will never do," and Georgie came a little further into the room. "You pride yourself on ferreting out things, and you have not been with the *not-distant* Miss Overton so much for nothing. You know who she is, and I know too."

"And pray who is she?" Maude asked, her cheeks flushing and her temper beginning to give way.

"She was Edna Browning, and Charlie Churchill's wife. My memory is not so short that I have forgotten the girl, bruised and scratched as she was then. I recognised her almost immediately, and I wonder at her temerity in venturing to a place where she knew she would see me more or less. Why did she come—that is, why has she taken another name than her own?"

There was no use for Maude to pretend ignorance any longer, and she frankly replied:

"It was my own plan, her coming here. The change of name was made long ago when she first went away. Her uncle preferred that she should bear his name, and so she joined her second to it, which made her 'Louise Overton.' I want Roy and his mother to like her; and both, or rather Mrs. Churchill, is more likely to do this if she knows her first as a stranger. Roy will like her any way; he cannot help it."

Maude had made her explanation and waited for Georgie's reply. There was a dark, threatening look in Georgie's eyes; her voice betokened agitation and excitement, as she said:

"I think less of the girl now than I did before; and so, too, will Roy and his mother when I tell them, as I shall."

"Tell them," Maude repeated, her blue eyes beginning to blaze with anger; "tell them, Georgie! You certainly cannot intend anything so mean as that! If Edna wishes to remain *incog.*, can you not, as a woman, respect her wishes, and keep her secret to yourself?"

"No; neither is it my duty to lend myself to the deception. I do not pretend to be one of the good ones, as you do, but I am a lover of truth, and should feel that I was acting a falsehood every time I addressed that girl as Miss Overton, or heard her so addressed. She has some deep-laid design in what she is doing, some design, which I shall take immediate steps to frustrate. I shall go to Mrs. Churchill to-morrow, and tell her who the girl is she has taken into such favour."

Georgie paused here and went on brushing her glossy hair, while Maude, who had been gathering all her forces for a grand onslaught and total rout of the enemy, said calmly:

"That is your decision, is it?"

"Yes, that is my decision, from which nothing can turn me."

"Then, Georgie, hear me," and Maude came close to Georgie, and looking her fully in the face, began: "You will not respect Edna Churchill's secret, and you talk grandly of being a lover of truth and hating to act a falsehood. Your whole life is a falsehood, and has been ever since you came to Oakwood!"

Maude spoke very slowly, still keeping her eyes fixed upon Georgie, into whose eyes there crept a look of terror, and whose hands shook as they shed back the mass of hair from her forehead, where drops of perspiration were visible.

Maude had not expected quite this effect, and sure that she could venture further, she continued:

"You say I boast of my faculty for ferreting out mysteries. Did it ever occur to you that I had ferreted out yours?"

Georgie's face was white now as Maude's dressing-gown, but her inquisitor was relentless, and continued:

"You have a secret, which you are guarding sedulously from the world in general and from Roy Leighton in particular; but, Georgie, just so sure as you breathe a word to anyone against Edna, or tell that she is not Miss Overton, or try, in any way, to prejudice either Roy or his mother, or anybody against her, just so sure Roy shall know that little passage in your life which you have hitherto succeeded in keeping from him. On the other hand, if you respect Edna's secret, yours, too, shall be respected, as it has been heretofore. Do you acquiesce in this? Is it a bargain between us?"

There was no need for Georgie to answer; her white, terrified face, from which her old assurance and haughtiness had fled, was a sufficient reply; and she sat for a moment staring at her companion in utter bewilderment. Then, with a tremendous effort, she recovered in part her composure, and said:

"I do not know what right you have thus to threaten me, or what you may have heard to my disadvantage from my enemies. I am not afraid of you, Maude, or of what you can do to harm me. Don't think I am, I beg; but, if it's any favour to you or John, for I know he has something to do with it, I will let the girl remain in peace at Leighton, only devoutly hoping that the childish face which lured poor Charlie Churchill to his death will not also be the ruin of my brother, whose *penchant* in that direction I very strongly suspect."

"Spare your suspicions there," Maude said, and her voice was gentler now.

She had conquered Georgie wholly, absolutely conquered her, and she began to feel a kind of pity for the proud woman who had been so terribly humbled, and who hereafter would inevitably stand somewhat in fear of her.

"Georgie," she continued, "I have no wish to quarrel with you. I loved Edna Churchill before I knew who she was. You will like her, too, when you know her better, but she will never be your sister. Don't fear for that, though John did love her once, and asked her to be his wife, and she refused him; and now the great, kind-hearted fellow has come to me to be consoled, and, Georgie, well—I may as well tell you, for he said I might—I am to be your sister some day, and I do not want to begin by quarrelling with you; believe me, I don't. I mean to make John a good wife and be a mother to that little crippled Annie, his adopted sister; he told me about her, and I almost cried with thinking of the poor creature, sitting all day in her chair, or lying in her crib so lonely. Yes, I mean to be kind to her, even if I worry John's life out of him. Speak to me, Georgie, and say if you are glad I am to be your sister?"

Maude had offered her hand to Georgie, over whom a curious change had come. The expression of fear had passed away, and as Maude talked of Annie, to whom she meant to be a mother, there came a softer look into her face, and, grasping Maude's proffered hand, she burst into such a passionate fit of weeping and bitter sobbing that Maude, forgetting all her anger, knelt down beside her, trying to soothe and quiet her, and asking what was the matter, and if she had offended her.

"I did not want you to tell of Edna," she said, "and I was harsh with you about that; but, Georgie, I want to like you and I want you to like me; for John's sake, if nothing else."

"I do, I will," Georgie gasped; "but Maude, oh, Maude, why did you open a grave I had thought closed for ever? I am glad you are to be John's wife—glad for him and glad for Annie. She will have a mother in you, I know, and may Heaven deal with you and yours as you deal with her—with Annie; oh, my darling, my darling!"

In her excitement Georgie said more than she would otherwise have done, and with that passionate cry, "my darling, oh, my darling," she seemed suddenly, to recollect herself, and, wresting her hand from Maude, she rose up swiftly, and went back to her own room, leaving Maude more perplexed and confounded, and more kindly disposed toward Georgie withal than she had ever been before.

"I have sealed her lips with regard to Edna," she thought, "but I have wounded her cruelly somehow, and it would seem through that little Annie. Can it be—?"

Maude's face grew white as ashes at the dreadful suspicion which flashed for an instant across her mind. In all her imaginations with regard to Georgie, she had never imagined anything like this, and she leaned against the dressing-bureau for support, so faint and weak she felt. Then, as the improbabilities of the case presented themselves to her mind, she strove to cast out the foul suspicion Georgie had earned in some way, but not like that. There was no such soil or taint on Georgie's robes, and she would not for a moment think it.

Meantime, in the next room Georgie Burton sat, with her head bowed down under a load of such bitter

shame and humiliation, that it seemed as if she never again could lift it up as proudly and assuredly as she had done before. The world was very dark to Georgie then, and more evils than one seemed to be threatening her. Maude knew her secret, in part, if not in whole—knew enough, at least, to blast her good name with Roy, should she dare to breathe to him a hint against Miss Overton. Her hands were tied in that direction; and when she remembered the kind, and even admiring glances she had seen Roy give to Edna, and thought of all the opportunities he would have of seeing and knowing, ay, and of loving her too, she writhed with pain, feeling an almost certain presentiment that this young girl, whom from the first she had to a certain degree felt to be her evil genius, had at last come between her and that for which she had waited and hoped so long. Furer, better thoughts, too, were stirring in Georgie's heart—thoughts of little Annie, to whom Maude was to be a mother.

"And I am glad," she whispered, "for I know she will be kind to Annie, and, for John's sake, will keep my miserable secret. Oh, that I should ever have come to this, when a word, a threat from a weak girl can turn me from my purpose! Yet so it is, and Edna Browning is safe; but, heavens! how I hate her!"

Georgie's demon was possessing her again, and her black eyes blazed with passion as she thought of the young girl, long ago fallen asleep beneath the same roof with Roy, whose last look out into the night had been in the direction of the window where a light was shining, and before which occasionally passed a little shadow as Edna moved about her room. Yes, she hated Edna Browning; but she could not do her harm, and she must ever pretend to like her, through her great fear of Maude—Maude, whom she felt as if she hated too, until she remembered Annie, and then there came a gush of tears, which cooled her feverish passion, and made her more humble and subdued, as in her velvet slippers she paced the floor noiselessly, until she heard a distant clock striking the hour of two.

There was to be a croquet party at Leighton to-morrow, and knowing how mental agitation and loss of sleep told upon her looks, Georgie ceased her rapid walking, and bathing her flushed face profusely with water, and rubbing it with liquid glycerine, she crept shivering to bed, and by a strong effort of the will, such as but few can practise, she succeeded in quieting her nerves, and slept peacefully at last.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

There's not a fibre in my trembling frame  
That does not vibrate when thy step draws near!  
There's not a pulse that throbs not when I hear  
Thy voice, thy breathing, nay, thy very name!

F. K. Butler

It was a very pretty picture which greeted Roy's vision next morning, when, at an earlier hour than usual, he arose and sauntered out into the garden, glancing involuntarily toward Miss Overton's window and noticing that it was open, but seeing no signs of its owner near it. Edna was in the garden before him, gathering a bouquet for the breakfast table, and looking so fresh, and bright, and beautiful, with the flush of early girlhood upon her face, and the deep peace shining in her brown eyes, that Roy felt his pulse beat a little faster as he approached her and passed the compliments of the morning.

"You are an early riser, Miss Overton, I see," he said, "and your cheeks show the good effects of it; they are almost as bright as the rose in your hand."

"The fates forbid. So high a colour as that would be vulgar, you know," Edna replied, laughing back at him, and then continuing: "Perhaps you think me a trespasser, or even worse, a thief, but I assure you I am neither. Mrs. Churchill told me yesterday to gather flowers whenever I liked, and I thought the breakfast-table might be improved with a bouquet. I always used to get one for Uncle Phil, when I could."

Roy hastened to reassure her, and then as he saw her trying to reach a sprig which grew too high for her, he pulled it down himself, and in doing so scattered a few drops of dew upon her uncovered head; very carefully he brushed them off, noting as he did so, the brightness and luxuriance of the golden brown hair, and the pure, clear colouring of the neck and brow, and thinking to himself what a dainty little creature she was, and that Leighton was a great deal pleasanter for having her there. She was an enthusiastic admirer of everything beautiful both in nature and art, and the grounds at Leighton filled her with delight, and she said out what she felt, while her eyes sparkled and shone, and almost dazzled poor Roy with their brilliancy, when, as was often the case, they were turned upward to his for assent to what she was saying. Roy had seen larger, brighter eyes—Georgie's were far more bril-



liant, as black orbs are apt to be—but he felt himself strongly fascinated by these brown eyes beside him, as he was by everything pertaining to Miss Overton. The gravel walks were still a little wet, and glancing down at Edna's feet, Roy saw that the little boots showed signs of damp, and stopped her suddenly.

"You are wetting your feet, Miss Overton," he said. "Let me go for your overshoes, and then I will take you around the grounds. It is a full hour before breakfast time, and mother will not need you till then."

Edna was not at all averse to the walk, but she preferred getting her own overshoes, and ran back to the house for them, while Roy stood watching her and thinking how little and graceful she was, and that she must by birth and blood belong to the higher class; and then he thought of Edna, whom Georgie had said Miss Overton resembled, and wondered if she were half as pretty, and graceful, and bright as this young girl who seemed to have taken his fancy by storm. We say fancy, putting it thus mildly, because if any one had then hinted to Roy Leighton that he was more interested in Miss Overton than men like him are usually interested in young ladies whom they have only known for twenty-four hours, he would have laughed at the idea, and if questioned closely would have acknowledged, to himself at least, that far down in his heart was an intention of ultimately marrying Georgie Burton. He rather owed it to her that he should make her his wife sometime, he thought; her name had been so long associated with his, and his mother was so fond of her.

Knowing this of himself, he felt almost as if he were already a married, or at least a pledged man, and as such, could admire and play the agreeable to Miss Overton as much as he pleased. She was coming towards him now, holding up her pretty white morning wrapper, and showing to good advantage her little feet, which the overshoes could not disguise. She carried her hat in her hand, and as she walked swiftly, her curls of golden brown were blown about her face by the morning wind, recalling involuntarily to Roy's mind that scene in the railway carriage more than two years ago, and the picture of himself in the poke bonnet, which he still carefully preserved. But Roy had no suspicion that the face confronting him was the same which had looked so sweetly and curiously at him in the railway carriage, and had with its witching beauty been the innocent means of opening that early grave where poor Charlie slept.

Edna had felt guilty and mean when listening to Mrs. Churchill talking to her of Charlie; but she should feel tenfold more guilty and mean, she thought, and find it harder work keeping quiet, if Roy, too, should tell her of his brother and his brother's wife. And Roy did tell her, or rather he talked of them, especially the young girl Edna, his sister, he called her, whom he had never seen but once.

"Miss Burton tells me you resemble her," he said; "and that may be the reason why you seem so little like a stranger to me. I should be so glad to know Edna—to have her here at home. Poor little girl! I am afraid she is finding the world a harsh one, struggling alone as she is!"

He spoke so kindly that Edna had hard work to refrain from crying out: "I am a deceiver, a cheat, an impostor, Mr. Leighton. I am not what I seem. I am Edna, and not Miss Overton."

But she did not do it; and when at last she did speak it was to ask if Mrs. Churchill had no friends or relatives that she should be thus thrown upon her own resources.

"Yes, she has an aunt—a Miss Letitia Pepper, whose name is something of an index to her character," Roy said; and then, as there came up before his mind the picture of Aunt Letty, as he first saw her, bending over her boiling cauldron, and looking more like one of Macbeth's witches than a civilised woman, he broke into a low, merry laugh, which brought a flush to Edna's face, for she guessed of what he was thinking.

She had heard from Aunt Letty herself of Roy's visit to Allen's Hill, and how he had found her aunt employed. She knew he was laughing at some reminiscence, and she could not forbear asking him if the thoughts of Miss Letitia were sufficient to provoke his risible faculties.

"Well, yes," Roy answered; "I always laugh when I recall my coming upon her so unexpectedly arrayed in the most wonderful costume you ever saw. And still, no queen ever bore herself more proudly than she did, as she tried to feign indifference to her own attire and my presence. It was a pleasant enough old place, or might be, with young people in it, though I fancy Edna must have led a drab life there, and was thus more easily led to escape from it. Still, I am not certain that in doing so she has not proved, in her own experience, the truth of Scylla and Charybdis."

"Oh, no, I am sure she has not," Edna exclaimed, so vehemently, that for a moment Roy looked curiously at her, noticing how flushed, and eager, and excited she looked, and wondering at it.

Then suddenly there came to him the remembrance of Georgie's words: "Wouldn't it be funny if this Miss Overton should prove to be Edna in disguise?" and without at all believing it was so, he resolved upon a test, which should at once decide the matter, and put to rest any doubts which might hereafter arise.

Just across a little plat of grass Russell was busily employed with a clump of dahlias, and thither Roy turned his steps, with Miss Overton at his side.

Russell had seen Edna before, as well as Georgie and John; Russell, who boasted of never forgetting a face, or voice, or name, would certainly remember Charlie's wife; and Roy stood talking to him several minutes, professing a great interest in the dahlias, but really watching him closely as he bowed very gravely to the young lady and then resumed his work.

Edna had thought of Russell, and dreaded him as the possible means of her being detected; but in his case, as in Georgie's, she trusted that the change in her dress, and the style of wearing her hair, and the expression of her face, from one of terror and distress to peace and happiness, would effectually prevent recognition. Georgie evidently did not know her, and Russell certainly would not. So she stood very quietly before him, seeming in no haste whatever to get away, and even asked him some questions herself about a new variety of dahlia which she had never before seen.

But Russell did know her. The face he had seen formerly had made too strong an impression upon him to be easily forgotten; and from the instant he saw the *soi-disant* Miss Overton, and heard her speak, he knew her for the girl who for a few hours had been Charlie's wife, and whom Georgie Burton had treated so indifferently. Why she should come to Leighton in disguise he could not guess, but inasmuch as she had done so, he supposed she must have some good reason for it; and, being a man of few words, he wisely resolved to hold his peace and quietly watch the events as they progressed. He had pitied Edna when he saw her crushed, benumbed, and bewildered with the great horror which had overtaken her; had pitied and thought her very young and pretty even then, with the tear-stains on her face, and the dark bruise on her forehead; while now, when he saw her in the full flush of health, he was dazzled with her fresh girlish beauty, and in the heart which no one had ever suspected of beating faster at the sight of female loveliness, there was registered a vow "to stand by Charlie's wife through thick and thin."

"She's a trim, neat sort of a craft," he thought, as he stood for a moment watching her as she walked away; "and though it puzzles me to guess what her object is in coming here as somebody else, she probably has one; and it isn't for me to tell of her."

Then by some curious link in the chain of his thoughts, Georgie Burton came into Russell's mind, and the rumours he had so frequently heard of her eventually coming to live at Leighton as the master's wife. Russell did not like Miss Burton, and once when her coming there seemed very near, judging from the frequency and length of Roy's visits to Oakwood, he had seriously contemplated giving up his place rather than acknowledge her for his mistress. "She was not the genuine article; not what Roy's wife should be," he thought, and it was thoroughly graven in his mind that somewhere he had seen her before she came to Oakwood as a belle and heiress. Where this was he could not tell, but always in thinking of it there came to his mind the remembrance of a pair of brilliant eyes, full of passion, and anxiety, and fear, seen once in a crowded room and never forgotten since. He did not really suppose that the eyes belonged to Miss Burton, for what had such as she to do with courts such as he had attended, but the eyes haunted him and he did not like Miss Burton, and he hoped his master would never marry her.

"Why can't he take this little girl with the innocent, childish face; that would be according to the Bible, for it reads somewhere of a woman who married seven brothers, and killed them all," and having thus quoted Scripture to his own satisfaction, Russell kept on with his work, while Roy led Edna down a grassy lane towards the little cottage where she had once thought to move him and his mother.

There was a half-sad, half-amused smile on Edna's face, as she recalled the days of her delusion, and looked at the cottage overgrown with ivy, where one of Roy's men was living, and with whom he stopped a moment to speak about a piece of work he wished done that day. It was nearly breakfast-time now, and the two walked slowly back to the house, where Mrs. Churchill sat waiting for them

in the cosy breakfast-room. The flowers Edna had gathered were upon the table, and Roy noticed them and thought how bright they made everything look, and enjoyed his breakfast as he had not done for many a day. It was pleasant to have a young face opposite to him; pleasant to have a young life break up the monotony of his own, and Leighton Place seemed to him as it never had before.

Notwithstanding what he had said to Georgie with regard to Edna's coming there in disguise, he was vaguely conscious of a feeling of disappointment when Russell gave no sign of recognition, thus putting to an end every doubt of Miss Overton's identity. He would rather it had been Edna herself there with him, and during the morning, while Miss Overton was engaged with his mother, he found himself thinking far more of his sister-in-law, and wondering where she was, than of the croquet party which Georgie had planned, and which was to come off that afternoon.

(To be continued.)

## UNLOCKING A HEART.

AT the age of thirty Allan Moore married, taking for his wife pretty Mary Gershom. He had been waiting until he could own a house, so that he might commence the new life fairly and independently; and when he said, "independently," he meant that he would not be dependent upon others for a home. He did not hope to be independent of toil and fatigue; but he had planned that he and Mary would work together, and, perhaps, in the coming years, find a competence upon which to enjoy healthful repose. Allan was a lawyer, with a fair practice, and with a connexion growing larger and larger with each succeeding term; and he had promised himself that when Mary had become his wife she would help him in his labours; not that she would delve for him into the mysteries of law, nor do the drudgery of copying; but he looked for sympathy and love—for a love that should make his labours light, and for a sympathy upon which he could rest his confidence.

It is said that "Love is blind," but true love is not so blind as it is often represented. The good qualities which have awakened the heart to love are not wanting; and even the imperfections were seen and noted in the outset. The good seed was in the soil, and so were the tares. The trouble is, that love is apt to be over-hopeful. It is not blind, but it looks through a sunny glass; and the future, thus viewed, presents only a pleasant prospect. Love is not so blind that it cannot see faults; but it is so kind and forbearing that it overlooks them; and thus it often happens that the tares are suffered to thrive, and finally to outgrow the better seed.

Allan Moore had known that Mary had her faults; but he had also known that her heart was good and true, and in his great love he found the assurance of peace and joy. But a season of disappointment was to come.

They had been married three years, and a cloud was upon the household. And whose was the fault? Allan examined himself very closely, but he could not discover that he had done wrong. And yet Mary was neither happy herself, nor did she try to make him happy. His business had increased until he had as much upon his hands as he could possibly attend to; he laboured early and late; he toiled without ceasing; but the sympathy which he had expected at home was not his. The result was, that he often wore a cloud upon his brow. Expecting coldness when he entered his home, he came with compressed lips; and fearing that he should find no sympathy, he did not seek it.

Allan Moore wondered had he been mistaken in his estimate of Mary—had he given her credit for good qualities which she did not possess? Certainly there was little of the good now to bless him; but evil continually. In short, his home was very far from being a happy one, and open rupture was frequent. Mary had become fretful and fault-finding, and instead of sympathising with her husband in his engrossing and oftentimes perplexing business, she would not permit him to mention his business in the house.

Mary was growing to have sharper features, and the old look of beauty was disappearing. But upon Allan the change was working with deeper effect. He was growing thin and pale, and there were spasms of pain and mysterious throbbings at the heart; and the sky was growing darker, and the pain was growing deeper.

Why was it? Was the good all gone, or had the tares only come up and outgrown the good—tares that might have been rooted out long ago, if the hand of prudence and skill had been applied? Had the heart been looked up, and all its good hidden from the fractifying light? If so, why could not some kind power unlock the closed heart, and set the blessings free?

The good genius was at hand.

Dr. Ralph Gershom, Mary's uncle, had seen the gathering cloud, and had marked the progress of the deepening gloom. He had known both the husband and the wife from their infancy; and he had loved them both; and when he saw them thus unhappy, he wondered if he could not help them. He knew that the greater fault was Mary's; and he knew, too, that she yet had a preponderance of good in her heart. He knew that she had in that heart the keenest of sympathies, the noblest of impulses, and the fount of a true and enduring love. He knew because, in the other years, he had seen them, and he knew that the good of the human heart cannot wholly die. It may be choked up, it may wither and shrink; and it may be crushed down beneath the superincumbent weight of evil; but while the human heart has pulsation of life it may be probed to the fountain of good, and in its darkest night it shall yield flashes of generous impulse.

Dr. Gershom—er, "uncle Ralph," as Mary called him—had been the family physician when she was a babe, and he was a man of sense as well as of experience and skill. Lately he had been called to prescribe for Allan, who was troubled more and more with that uncomfortable throbbing of the heart.

I cannot tell what uncle Ralph really thought. He may have thought just as another experienced physician would have thought—that the palpitation was simply the result of indigestion; and that the dull pain came from pneumogastric sympathy; and, further, that the cause of the whole lay in nervous derangement consequent upon mental care and labour. But, be that as it may, he resolved that he would make use of Allan's heart in unlocking the heart of the wife.

"Uncle Ralph, what do you really think of Allan?"

Dr. Gershom had called in, ostensibly for the purpose of leaving some medicine for the husband, but he had taken a seat, and opened conversation with his niece.

"Mary, do you want me to tell you the truth?"

He spoke very solemnly, and with a grave look. "The truth, uncle!" she repeated, with a startled expression. "You do not think there is anything serious?"

"What can be more serious than a disease of the heart?"

"But Allan has no such thing."

"My dear girl, you must not deceive yourself. You may not keep Allan long with you. Excessive labour, ambition to achieve great results, and a want of healthful recreation, have strained his heart more than it will bear. I tell you plainly, Allan is dying."

"Dying!"

"Yes—surely. It is but a question of time. We may save him to prolonged and useful life if we can remove the cause of his disease. Have you not observed how pale and thin he has grown? And have you not marked how often the pain comes to his heart? Alas, poor Allan! I dare not tell him how near he is to the brink. I spoke with him once, a few days ago, upon the subject. I told him there was danger."

"You told him? And how did it affect him?"

"He only smiled, and shook his head."

"Smiled?"

"Yes; but with tears in his eyes. He said if he could only leave his wife and child well and comfortably provided for, he should be willing to go. That was when he had a great pain in his heart."

Mary arose, and went and placed her hand upon the doctor's shoulder.

"Uncle Ralph!—do you—do you—tell me truly?"

"I only tell you what I fear, my child. I tell you what is possible; aye, what is inevitable, sooner or later, if Allan do not find help. But do not tell him what I have told to you. It might break him down at once. We must keep him with us while we can. He must not fail and die now, in the noontide of life, if mortal power can save him. But, my little girl, you must be prepared. The blow may fall at any time. These heart-troubles are most treacherous. It is for you to make his pillow smooth, and give him comfort for the few short days—"

"Oh, uncle! uncle! do not say so! Oh, my soul! Allan must not die! Better, a thousand times, that I should go, and leave him to live his bright and useful life!"

Ralph Gershom drew his weeping niece to his bosom, and gently whispered:

"Stay with him, Mary, and give him strength and hope and courage. While I give him such medicine as I have to give, be it yours to draw him away from his labours when you can, and make his burdens light. Let us do this, and leave the rest with Heaven."

After her uncle had gone, Mary moved about the house like one awakened from a troubled dream, gathering up the threads of the past and weaving

them into the woof of the present. How the old love burned up, and how dear to her were the memories of the brighter times! Her husband dying! Oh, it could not be! It should not be!

And yet—and yet—what could she do if the die were fatally cast? Ah, she could bless him while he lived. Yes, she could do that!

That evening, when Allan Moore returned to his home, his wife met him at the door, and put her hands up to his shoulders, and kissed him.

"You are late, Allan. Dinner has been waiting for you."

"But you have not waited, Mary?"

"Yes, Allan. I could not eat alone to-day."

"You could not?" He spoke like one in a dream.

"No. I wanted the light of the other times, Allan—the light which only your own presence can give."

And she wound her arm within his own, and led him into the hall, where she helped him to remove his overcoat; and when he had pulled off his boots, and put on the dainty slippers which she had ready for him, she led the way to the dining-room.

His old favourite dishes; the silver bright and clean; the china drinking the gaslight into its translucent substance; the napkins white like snow; and the food as she knew he preferred it, and, above all, her own face, wearing a smile of the old sweetness, presiding over the scene.

Was he dreaming, or was it real? Almost afraid to speak, lest a breath might dispel the happy illusion, he drank in the joy of the occasion.

When the meal was concluded Allan retired to the sitting-room, where, when she had attended to her household duties, his wife joined him.

"Now, now, Allan, where are you going?"

"He had arisen as she entered."

"To my own room, Mary. I have papers to copy."

"Cannot others do your copying?"

"These are papers which I dare not trust to other eyes."

"But you will trust me, Allan?"

"Trust—you?"

"He was in the dream again."

"Yes. If you will explain to me the work, and leave them with me on the morrow, I will copy them for you. You know I write well."

"Mary!"

"Oh, Allan!—my husband; my own true love!" she had moved up and laid her hand upon his shoulder.—"You are working too hard. If you will let me help you. I will help you now; and by and bye you shall rest. We will go away among the green fields, and the brooks, and the hills."

"Mary! my darling! What sweet music is this?" He took her to his bosom, with his arms twined closely around her.

"Allan, I have been very unkind of your good, and I have been very miserable; but I will be so no more. If you will let me help you; if you will give me back your love and your trust; if you will lean upon me when you are weak, and rest upon my bosom when you are in pain; if you will forgive me for all the wrong and the error—I will bless Heaven, and take courage; and we will be happy always while we live!"

Oh, blessed, happy hour!—blessing and happiness reaching out into all the coming years! The heart had been unlocked, and its flood of true love, gushing forth into a current broad and strong, had washed away the stains of evil, and purified the temple; and upon the sacred altar of their home the vestal fires burned brightly.

A year had passed when Mary said, as she stood and looked up into her husband's face:

"Allan, how strong and well you have grown. You don't know how proud and happy it makes me."

He caught her to his bosom, and held her there.

"My blessed wife! how could I help being strong and well beneath the influence of a love like yours. I owe you much, darling—very much. I cannot tell you how happy I am!"

And Mary knew that the fountain of goodness in her heart could never be closed up again while sense and memory were hers.

S. C. J.

**PALMYRA AND TADMOR.**—The wife of Captain Burton, the traveller, writes from Damascus a pleasant letter about the East. She states that the road to Palmyra and Tadmor is now open to European travellers. She has visited them, and says that Palmyra is only worth visiting if some days can be given to it, especially to examine the old Palmyrene tomb-towers which there represent the pyramids. Old Tadmor and its vicinity it would not be difficult, she thinks, to revive and cultivate when there is protection for life. Speaking of the tomb-towers, Mrs. Burton says: "There are three tomb-towers which still may yield results; the people call them Kasr el Zayneh (pretty palace), Kasr el Azba (palace of the maiden), and Kasr el Arus (palace of the bride). Explorers, however,

must bring ropes and hooks, ladders which will reach to 80ft., planks to bridge over broken staircases, and a stout crowbar. We had none of these things. I have little doubt that the upper stories still contain mummies, tessere, and other curiosities. We made sundry excavations, but we lacked implements, and our stay was not long enough for good results. The march from Damascus to Palmyra may be done in four days by strong people well mounted, as we did on return."

## FACETIE.

A WOMAN that marries a man because he is a good match, must not be surprised if he turn out a lueker.

"MOTHER, I'm afraid a fever would go hard with me." "Why, my son?" "Because, you know, mother, I'm so small there wouldn't be room for it to run."

"CAPITAL weather Mr. Jones, capital weather. My wife's got such a bad cold she can't speak. I like such weather."

## EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

*Niggardly Host (who has just finished carving a turkey):* "Will you have a small piece of the dark meat, or a small piece of the white meat?" *Hungry Guest (who is addicted to the habit of plain speaking):* "Thank you, I'll take a large piece of both."

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN.

In a circular, headed "The Bishop of London's Fund," occurs the following startling paragraph:—

"The population of London had up to that time (1863) unhappily been allowed to increase, from less than a million at the beginning of the present century to more than three millions at the present time, without any proportionate provision being made for its religious wants."

We respectfully suggest that in the next issue of the circular it should run thus:

"The population of London had up to that time (1863) increased from less than a million, at the beginning of the present century, to more than three millions at the present time, without, unhappily, any proportionate provision being made for its religious wants."

In which case it would not read, as we fancy it does now, that the good Bishop of London regards the increase of population as an offence in itself, against which most stringent measures should have been taken.—*Will-o'-the-Wisp.*

AMERICAN ADVICES state that the prominent Indian chiefs have assembled at Washington to have a "talk" with the President on questions affecting the maintenance of peace on the Western border. We are informed that "Spotted Tail," "Fast Bear," "Yellow Hair," and "Swift Beaver" have arrived, and that the leading chief of the hostile Sioux, "Red Cloud," is on his way, accompanied by "Man-afraid-of-his-Horses, who has the unfortunate but civilised failing of getting drunk."

A CAUTION AS TO CROWDS.—A foreign gentleman, standing in a crowd, by an abrupt, and probably nervous gesture of his hands, caused a couple of policemen to make the mistake of taking him into custody for attempting to pick pockets, and he was shut up at Bow Street from Saturday till Monday. Mr. Flowers, in discharging him, recommended him to "avoid crowds for the future." Good advice for everybody who does not wish to be taken up as a thief, or let in for a witness. Finding himself in a crowd, a gentleman who does not know what to do with his hands cannot dispose of them better than by putting them in his pockets. He will thus not only keep his hands away from other people's pockets, but keep the hands of other people out of his own pockets too.—*Punch.*

## A POINT OF VIEW.

Tomkins: (he has heard his friend Stodge talk so much about that lovely spot Wobleswick, whither he was going sketching, that he was induced to accompany him. A day has elapsed, and he is awaking to the horror of his situation!): "Seems to me an infern—I call it rather a dull place!"

Stodge: "Dull, my dear fellow! How can you say so? Look at this beautiful, breezy common! And the lines of those old houses on the beach, breaking the horizon, and the colour! And the jolly quiet of the place! None of your beastly barrel-organs or gaping tourists swarming about! I thought you'd like it!"—*Punch.*

"ONE DOWN AND THE OTHER UP."—Will has been somewhat puzzled by an announcement, which has appeared, that—"Lord Stratheden will move, after the recess, that when two noble lords rise to address the House simultaneously, the Lord Chancellor, or, if the House be in Committee, the Chairman, shall direct one of them to proceed." Does this imply that, during the past history of the House of Lords, when two lords rose together, they



persisted in attempting to drown each other's voices until the one with the weakest lungs had to give way. For that, with the courtesy which is the particular attribute of the Upper House, neither would proceed to the exclusion of the other, so that the House was left in a dead silence until the politer of the two yielded the point, and consented to proceed? Will is in doubt on this point, and would be glad if some noble lord would solve his difficulty.—*Will o' the Wisp.*

**OXFORD AND ORIGIN OF SPECIES.**—The University of Oxford has evinced liberality in offering Mr. Darwin, who is a Cambridge man, and a scientific naturalist, the honorary degree of D.C.L. They might have proposed to create the great Doctor of Development a D.D., which, of course, nobody could suppose to mean Doctor of Divinity.—*Punch*

**ROUGE ET NOIR.**

Captain Waddylove has fired off a round or two of blank to propitiate "Little Pitcher."

Little P.: "Oh, let it off again—do!"

Captain: "I have no more powder."

Little P.: "But, cousin Emma, won't that red powder in the box on your dressing-table do?"—*Fun.*

**FOOLS AND THEIR MONEY, ETC.**

"The Law Lords were yesterday occupied in hearing arguments in a cause which has already come before two tribunals in Scotland, and is now brought on as an appeal before their Lordships' House. The question at issue affects the ownership of a triangular piece of ground, about eight square yards in extent, and estimated to be worth about £5. The Lord Chancellor's attendance was required at a Cabinet Council, but Lords Chelmsford, Westbury, and Colonsay sat to hear the case, in which, amongst other counsel, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, Sir Roundell Palmer, and Mr. Mellish are engaged."—*Daily News.*

After reading the above highly instructive paragraph, which is not taken from a work of fiction describing the habits and practices of an imaginary nation, but from a newspaper informing its readers of what goes on in this advancing country and in these enlightened times, can any perplexed Father-familias, puzzled to know what he shall do with his numerous sons, hesitate for a single moment to bring them all up to the lucrative profession of the law?—*Punch.*

**VERY SHARKING.**

The author of the following paragraph is—never—mind:—

"A fine shark about five feet long was captured the other day off the entrance to Langstone Harbour by Henry Burton, a fisherman of Portsmouth, assisted by his two sons. It is exactly two years since some sharks were seen in the waters of the Solent."

Two years—what a donkey! London is full of sharks, and they are always in-Solent!—*Fun.*

**SELF-DENTAL IN EXCELSIS.**

Civilian: "Are there many Irish in your Corps?" Private O'Flanagan: "Is it Orlish ye means? Sorra the one or thim would be allowed in the Regiment!"—*Punch.*

**UN MOT DE MADAME RAMSBOTHAM.**—Mrs. Ramsbotham (Mrs. Malaprop's friend) was much grieved about the fire at Persa. Recounting the details to a friend, she said, "You will be glad to hear that though the British Consul lost almost everything, he managed to save his anchorvies." It turned out that she meant the Archives.—*Punch.*

**A CLIMAX.**

Wistful Benedick: "That's a healthy lad of yours, my friend!"

Bob Quiverful: Yes, he's a fine boy, sir—as fine a boy as ever you see in all yer born days, bless his little 'art! And that ain't all neither; he's the most generous-hearted little chap in the 'ole world; and the bravest, and affectionatest, let alone bein' the biggest and the 'ansomest. But, Lor' bless yer, master! Why, we've got another little chap at 'ome as this one 'ere ain't even so much as a patch upon! Aint we, Polly?"—*Punch.*

**KNOT A DOUBT ABOUT IT.**—A contemporary criticising the Married Women's Property Bill, heads his remarks, "Husband and Wife, Limited." Why, this is nothing new! In this country, at least, husband and wife always have been limited—to one husband or to one wife, that is, at a time. Whatever comes of the Bill, there can't be two opinions about one thing, viz., that every woman's property is decidedly the marriage-tie, and she can't do better than stick to it.—*July.*

**ANCIENT VEGETATION IN THE ALPS.**—In a recent communication to the Swiss Alpine Club, M. Alphonse De Candolle suggests the desirability of searching for the remains of that vegetation which existed on the Alps previous to the formation of the glaciers. The Alps, he points out, assumed their present contour and actual height at the end of the pliocene epoch. The great development of glaciers and snow took place in the subsequent geological epoch. As snow and ice are conservative agents, so he thinks it possible that remains of crustacea, diatoms, seeds, &c., may exist buried in the ice at

great depths. In commenting on this suggestion, Professor Heer, a great authority on matters connected with fossil botany, says that the chances of finding any such remains as those indicated by Professor De Candolle are very slight, because—1. Organised beings only pass into the fossil condition under rare and exceptional circumstances; 2. The so-called perpetual snow is not really perpetual, the upper layers exert a pressure on the lower and squeeze them down the slopes of the mountain, so that the rocky surface of the latter is necessarily denuded. The only chance of finding such remains as M. De Candolle alludes to, would be to search in the deep bowl-like cavities or fissures where the snow and ice are not subjected to this constant movement. Lastly, M. De Candolle suggests, what seems more practicable, and what certainly is desirable, the fixing on the summit of Mont Blanc, or other lofty mountain, of some gauge by which the depth of the snow and ice could be ascertained from time to time. He describes an instrument adapted for the purpose. As to the seeds, &c., we think that if they by chance survived the crushing and grinding of the glaciers, they would be found at the lower end of the glaciers—in the moraines. We are not aware that any fossil remains of the kind indicated have been found in such situations.

**"TRY AGAIN."**

If you find you are baffled in hope,

Your prospects look dull and forlorn,

With harsh fortune vainly you cope,

And nought comes to brighten your morn;

Still wholly yield not to despair,

Strive boldly, nor weakly complain!

Know Man's noblest motto while here

Is "try hard, and try, try again!"

Whatever your station may be,

There always is something to do;

If riches show'r thickly on thee,

Yet sometimes the blessing we rue;

If wearied by poverty's frown,

And penury chill heart and brain,

Don't live with a spirit bow'd down,

But up and be trying again.

There is work for us all; we must on,

Either business or labour to swell—

No difficult trials beset one,

But oppress e'en the other as well;

Some sorrow or grief may be too deep;

Rugged cares may be hard to sustain;

But still a brave front we must keep,

And try hard, and try, try again.

Persistence alone gains success,

Frowning clouds at her smile flee away;

And dark troubles surely grow less

While her sunshine-beams gladden our way.

Though nought is perfection while here,

And troubles seem conquer'd in vain,

Yet one soothing motto will cheer,—

'Tis, strive hard, and try, try again.

Geo. C. SWAIN.

**GEMS.**

It is a beautiful thought in some Oriental lands to leave untouched the fruits that are shaken from the trees by the wind, these being regarded as sacred to the poor and the stranger.

HABIT is like the dropping of water upon a rock,—it wears into the life, and the marks it makes can never be effaced without the chisel and the hammer of self-denial and self-discipline.

Let what you do be done with a will. Energy and perseverance will accomplish wonders.

THEY who have experienced sorrow are the most capable of appreciating joy; so, those only who have been sick feel the full value of health.

BETTER be envied than pitied. When men envy you, they feel that you are above them; when they pity you, they feel that they are above you.

If men would but follow the advice which they bestow gratuitously on others, what a reformation would be effected in their characters!

THE true gentleman is always modest. He is more ready to obtain the opinions of others than to parade his own.

**HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.**

**SALT IN COOKING VEGETABLES.**—If one portion of a dish of vegetables be boiled in pure water, and the other in water to which a little salt has been added, a decided difference may be observed in the tenderness, flavour, and, if potatoes, meanness of the two. Onions are probably more improved by a cooking in salt water than any other vegetable. Much of their unpleasant smell is taken away, and a peculiar sweetness and improved aroma are de-

cidedly apparent. Salt hinders the evaporation of the soluble and flavouring principles of vegetables.

**TO MAKE POMADE.**—Our lady readers who cultivate flowers can make their own pomade by following the ensuing directions:—Place any suitable vessel in a bowl of hot water, then fill the vessel with pure clarified fat (beef marrow is the best); place the bowl on the kitchen stove, or near the fire, so as just to keep the fat in a liquid state; put as many flowers as possible, of any one kind, as you wish the pomade to be scented with, into the fat, and let them remain in it for twenty-four hours, then strain the fat from them and add more flowers. Continue this process for six or eight days, and you will have pomade à la rose, à la mignonette, or any other sort, according to the flowers that have been used.

**HOW TO BAKE APPLES.**—An apple may be spoiled in the baking—often is. Your dish must be scrupulously clean, and your baking must be done leisurely. You can reduce, burn an apple in a short time; but if you bake for several hours—three to four, more or less, according to your fruit, some kinds baking more readily than others—you will have a soft, pulpy fruit, wrinkled, and brown, and shining, whole, or perhaps with a slight vertical break, which break must occur, if it occur at all, towards the last of the baking; occurring early, it will intercept the baking at that place, as the exposed part is a powerful non-conductor, or resistor of heat. On the other hand, the peel is a good conductor, and, with a moderate fire, will bake and finish your fruit. It will do this without breaking the skin, though it may strain it at first (or at any stage) very tightly; yet a good strong skin will resist the strain sufficiently to keep it intact and preserve the juice, which must not be permitted to escape. Of course, only sound apples, thoroughly free from vermin and rot, sound throughout, core and all, must be used.

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

ELEVEN thousand three hundred visitors have already arrived at Baden. It exemplifies the chapter of chances and the habits of people, that this is exactly the same amount as last year at this time.

**THE POTATO CROP.**—The Cornish potato crop is turning out remarkably well this year, and the middle of July has been reached without any symptoms of disease. A larger quantity of early potatoes has been forwarded to London than for many years past.

**VALUE OF VEGETABLES.**—Now, what the lime-juice is to sailors, so are the potash plants, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, asparagus, cabbage, etc., to us on land. Without these potash plants we should be liable to scurvy or similar diseases. Potatoes do not contain so much nutriment, nor so much starch, as wheat flour or many other substances, but they contain this potash. If we were to discard potatoes and similar plants and eat nothing but bread, we should, undoubtedly, suffer in our health; because, though bread contains a large quantity of nitrogenous matter, of starch, and of phosphates, yet it is deficient in potash.

**THE QUEEN AND CHARLES DICKENS.**—An incident is mentioned as showing in how great regard Mr. Dickens, as a man and as an author, was held by the Queen.—Shortly before his death, he sent to her Majesty an edition of his collected works; and when the Clerk of the Council went to Balmoral, the Queen, knowing the friendship that existed between Mr. Dickens and Mr. Helps, showed the latter where she had placed the gift of the great novelist. This was in her private library, and her Majesty expressed her desire that Mr. Helps should inform Mr. Dickens of this arrangement. On his return from Balmoral, Mr. Helps wrote to Mr. Dickens, in pursuance of her Majesty's desire; but the letter that contained so remarkable a tribute to the great novelist could only have reached Gad's Hill while he lay unconscious and dying. Mr. Arthur Helps, on becoming acquainted with the death of Mr. Charles Dickens, telegraphed the lamentable intelligence to the Queen at Balmoral, and immediately received the following sympathetic reply:—"From Colonel Ponsonby to Mr. Helps, Council Office.—The Queen commands me to express her deepest regret at the sad news of Charles Dickens's death." This feeling message was at once transmitted to the family at Gad's Hill.—The last words we find in the last number of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" are singularly suggestive—"Comes to an end—for the time." The work will, it is to be feared, like Thackeray's "Dennis Duval," remain a "Story without an End." Only three numbers of the story of the novel besides those already published have been completed, but sufficient memoranda are forthcoming to enable the reader to arrive at a partial solution of the mystery.

## CONTENTS.

Page	Page
STRANGELY MARRIED... 241	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES... 263
PRICE OF MEAT A CENTURY AGO... 244	MISCELLANEOUS... 263
PEDESTRIAN EXPLOIT... 244	THE POTATO CROP... 263
INTER LAKE DISTRICT... 244	VALUE OF VEGETABLES... 263
REGINALD WARNER... 245	THE QUEEN AND CHARLES DICKENS... 263
DR. LIVINGSTONE... 247	SONG... 264
LADY BARBARA... 248	
THE EARL OF CLAREN- DON... 251	THE VEILED LADY, commenced in... 347
THE MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND... 253	LEIGHTON HALL, com- menced in... 360
THE VEILED LADY... 257	MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND, commenced in... 368
LEIGHTON HALL... 259	STRANGELY MARRIED, commenced in... 370
UNLOCKING A HEART... 261	REGINALD WARNER, commenced in... 373
PALMYRA AND TADMOR... 262	LADY BARBARA, com- menced in... 373
FACTS... 262	
A CLIMAX... 263	
ANCIENT VEGETATION IN THE ALPS... 263	
TRY AGAIN... 263	
GENS... 263	

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ST. CRISPIN.—The case can be cleaned with spirits of turpentine, diluted with rectified spirits of wine.

ADONIS (Liverpool).—The contributions are declined.

AN ANXIOUS FRIEND.—If the order was really made, the person against whom it was issued is liable, and can be proceeded against when he returns, or when you can find him.

Z. X. (Bradford).—A good remedy for ordinary pimples on the face is a teaspoonful of flower of sulphur taken in a wineglassful of milk before breakfast, and continued for a few mornings.

EMIGRANT.—There are no assisted passages to New York. The lowest cost of a passage to that place from Liverpool is about seven pounds in a steam-ship, and about four pounds in a sailing vessel.

ADA.—To destroy the green worm or any kind of insect by which plants are infected, put some unsalted lime into a pail of water, let it stand for half an hour to settle, and then pour the water on the plants.

MIMA should apply to the address given in the advertisement to which she alludes.

D. E. F.—The word "gymnosophist" signifies an Indian sage, who has devoted himself to an austere life, and who goes about in a state of nudity as one element of austerity. It is a word which is often met with in tales the scenes of which are laid in the East.

JUPITER.—There are various causes from which the spots may arise. Your letter is so indefinite that we can advise nothing beyond an ordinary aperient two or three times a week, and an abstinence from stimulating beverages.

S. D.—The white appearance given to a wedding-cake is technically termed icing, although the method employed is just the reverse of that which the term would lead you to expect. To produce this appearance you must crush a pound of lump sugar, then pass it through a lawn sieve, put it in a clean basin, add to it the whites of six eggs and a very small quantity of powder blue; beat this mixture well for ten minutes, then squeeze in the juice of a lemon till it becomes thick and transparent. Set the cake you intend to ice in an oven for five minutes; then smoothly spread the mixture over the top and sides of the cake.

A. Z.—The privilege termed "benefit of clergy" has long ceased. It was an institution of the middle ages, and existed in a reformed form down to the reign of Queen Anna. By it the persons of clergymen were exempted from criminal process before a secular judge. The privilege was at one time extended to all who could read.

N. N.—The tables have been turned since those days. Then the flesh of the goose was considered impure and indigestible, while that of the swan was esteemed a great delicacy. During the sixteenth century the swan as an article of food was in great repute, and was usually served at state and fashionable banquets.

J. C. E. S.—In all probability the defect is one that cannot be remedied. The stimulating property of the onion externally applied is sometimes beneficial. The mode is to rub the bald part well with that esculent every morning.

ENGINEER.—I. Youlose. The London and Birmingham Railway was opened in 1825, and it is amongst the earliest railways formed, but it was preceded by the Liverpool and Birmingham in 1827, and the Liverpool and Manchester in 1825. 2. Kiosk is a name that was originally applied to a Turkish pleasure-house. It has recently been used in connection with similar Parisian buildings.

VIOLETTA G.—1. Exercise, cheerfulness, and the cold bath. 2. Yes. 3. The 14th November, 1856, fell on a Friday. 4. No. 5. There is no harm in a smile spontaneously evoked; in such a case it is a smile and nothing more.

W. J.—Notwithstanding your relationship to the deceased who left no will, you can maintain no action at law unless you take out letters of administration to the estate. Without such letters you have, in strictness, no right to take an item of the property, for after the decease of any person intestate his personal estate rests in the judge of the Court of Probate for the time being until letters of administration are granted.

R. W.—Since an order of affiliation has been made upon you, nothing but payment can relieve you from the responsibility thereby imposed. Your liability still continues, notwithstanding that for the present you have managed to evade the difficulty. The time for an appeal to the sessions has passed.

A CLERK.—It takes thirteen figures to represent a billion. It is a sum which is seldom heard of here; we believe that in France, where they reckon by francs, that billions of francs are occasionally spoken of. It would be impossible for any teller to count a billion. Counting 200 pieces in a minute, and continuing at that rate for twelve hours every day, it would take more than nineteen thousand years to complete the task.

CIVIS.—Both Charles I. and Charles II. found occasion to raise money by the grant of annuities chargeable on particular branches of the revenue, and Kings of England who reigned before them were borrowers of money. But the National Debt, as it is now known, did not commence till the reign of William III., and in the year 1690. In 1697 it only amounted to five millions. The principal cause of the immense increase since that time has been war.

W. J. D.—Your statement is too confused to enable us to pass an opinion upon your difficulty. We can therefore only broadly state that it is just possible that you have been released from the liability which you incurred when you became surety; because if a creditor by an arrangement made with the debtor subsequent to the time at which the surety signed the bond, preclude himself from demanding payment of his debt at the time originally agreed on, the surety will be discharged. You must distinguish the making of a new arrangement from the mere neglect of the creditor to enforce payment of the debt from the principal debtor at the time it becomes due.

EMMA.—To make home-made bread, procure a quart of flour and mix with it a spoonful of salt; then mix two tablespoonfuls of yeast in half a pint of lukewarm water; add this mixture to the flour mixture and mix both well together. Let the compound stand for an hour, then add a pint of warm water, and knead the whole well together. When this has stood for another hour it is ready for the oven.

## SONG.

Ask the young and bright-eyed morning,  
Why it streaks the east with red;  
Ask the dew the rose adorning,  
Why its radiant pearls are shed.  
Ask the gale, in summer sighing,  
Why the trembling blossoms shake;  
Or the snows, in winter lying,  
Why so lightly falls each flake.  
Whence its music, ask the fountain,  
Why so soft of heart the dove,  
Why the streamlet leaves the mountain,  
Only ask not why I love.  
When I see a cheek revealing  
All the charms of breaking day;  
Softer tears of rapture stealing  
Than the dewdrop on the spray;  
When I see a bosom trembling  
At the promise of its own worth,  
Footstep light, the snow resembling,  
As it falls upon the earth;  
When I hear soft accents flowing,  
Clear as streams from rocks above,  
From a heart with kindness glowing,  
Can you ask me why I love? A. H.

HARRY SMITH.—You must furnish us with particulars of the place at which the goods were purchased, before we can give you a precise reply to your question. As a general principle an honest purchaser of stolen goods will be bound to restore them without remuneration to the true owner, if the goods have not been bought in open market, or market overt, as it is termed. Every shop in the city of London where goods are openly sold is considered as a market overt for such things as by the trade of the owner are put there for sale. It is questionable, however, whether this privilege extends to shops not in the city. Sometimes the purchase of stolen goods even in market overt will not give a title to the honest purchaser; as is the case when the true owner prosecutes the thief and obtains his conviction.

MAR.—1. Sponge the stains over with a little sal volatile. 2. No, it must be dyed. 3. A mixture to disperse freckles is composed of one ounce of lemon-juice, a small quantity of powdered borax, and a little sugar. It should be rubbed on the face twice a day. 4. They require to be carefully bandaged. 5. The crystallisation of sugar is effected from a syrup obtained by boiling raw sugar with lime-water, to which is afterwards added some bullock's blood. This syrup in a thin state is poured into moulds into which threads or twigs have been inserted. These moulds are kept warm in a stove for several days. Perfect stillness is important, as disturbance reduces the size of the crystals which form upon the strings or sides of the mould. The syrup is afterwards gradually let off. 6. You will find the information asked for in your sixth query in a reply to another correspondent.

C. R. A.—There seems to be an impatience about the complaint you are anxious to prefer. Although it is a trivial matter, it is of such trivialities that comfort is composed. Forgetfulness, however, is perhaps the best prescription in this instance. In an attempt to calm your ruffled spirit, suffer us to remind you of an old adage, which recounts that there are seven chances against even the most simple dish being presented to the mouth in absolute perfection. Thus, instance a leg of mutton. The mutton must be good; it must have been kept a good time; it must be roasted at a good fire; by a good cook, who must be in a good temper; you must be in good spirits, and have a good appetite.

C. H.—The word "knot" when used to designate the rate of speed at which a ship sails, signifies a geographical mile, which is a greater distance than an ordinary mile, inasmuch as a geographical mile is one sixtieth part of a degree, whereas it takes sixty-nine and one third ordinary miles to make a degree. The knots are rove into the log-line, which is the apparatus by which the velocity of the ship through the water is measured. The knots are usually placed at distances of fifty feet from each other. As soon as the log-line is thrown into the sea a half-minute sand-glass is turned, and when the sand has all run out the apparatus controlling the log-

line is stopped. Now as 120 half minutes make an hour and 120 times fifty feet make nearly a geographical mile, so many knots of the log-line will run off the reel on which it has been wound, in one experiment as the vessel sails geographical miles in an hour. A geographical mile is about 840 feet longer than an ordinary mile; and three geographical miles make one nautical league.

TWO.—In playing chess, you cannot castle if the king or rook has been moved, or if the king is in check, or if there is any piece between the king and the rook, or if the king has to pass over a square attacked by an adverse piece or pawn. You may castle either on the king's or queen's side.

CREDITOR.—The rules regulating the payment of interest upon debts are as follow: Interest is not payable upon debts unless agreed on, or unless a promise could be implied from the usage of trade or other circumstances, or unless upon an overdue bill of exchange or a judgment of a court of law, or unless demand for payment shall have been made in writing so as such demand give notice to the debtor that interest will be claimed from the date of such demand until the time of payment.

SUFFERER.—Of all the curious methods employed to convey to a lassie's heart the notion that an admirer's heart is rapidly beating pie-pat for her, your idea of confining your declaration of love to an enumeration of the amount of dividends paid by the railway companies is certainly the oddest. Your method, though terse, is of course easily understood by us. You have a correct appreciation of the axiom that money makes the man. Your qualification is evidently a good round sum well invested in first-class paying lines. With the concise habits predominant in men of your stamp and success, you point emphatically to a substantial reality, and rightly consider that such a solid fact is worth volumes of talk. We are afraid that the lady hardly understands you though, and as you ask for advice, we suggest that in your own brief way you should remonstrate with her upon the derision she throws upon the "stuff" which you desire she should share; if after such remonstrance she persists in her refusal, you must look upon her in the same light in which you considered those bad bargains in days of yore, which it was your custom decisively and promptly to cut. In your new search for a partner, avoid all those ladies who like admiration and adoration, all who have any fancy for such worn-out romances as chivalry or sentiment, all who have any taste for poetry or music or painting, all who are fond of children and would like lovingly and softly to look up to their father for counsel and direction. Let your efforts be directed to the discovery of a girl who is fond of money and of money alone.

EXPECTATION, twenty-six, 5ft. 6in., brown hair and eyes, with large features. Respondent must be loving, about twenty, with light eyes, blue preferred, and with a good figure.

MAUD, twenty-three, medium height, fair, domesticated, amiable, and fond of home. Respondent must be from twenty-six to thirty.

JENNY and POLLY, tall, ladylike, loving, merry, and fond of music. Respondents must be tall, dark, and gentlemanly, having an income.

CONSTANCE, nineteen, tall, fair, violet eyes, dark hair, musical, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty-three, dark, tall, with an income of 200l. or 300l. a year.

ADMEY, twenty-two, tall, dark, domesticated, and affectionate. Respondent should be tall, a fair mechanic or tradesman, and her senior.

F. A. E., thirty-three, tall, fair, and domesticated. Respondent should be her senior and fond of home.

FRED, twenty-three, 5ft. 2in., dark hair and eyes, and fond of home. Respondent should be a brunet.

E. T. W., twenty-two, 5ft. 8in., light hair, blue eyes, loving, and fond of home. Respondent should be a blonde and a resident of the West-end of London.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LIZIE is responded to by—"Henry H.," forty-six, and master of a ship.

JENNIE by—"J. McC.," twenty-one, 5ft. 3in., fair, amiable, and hazel eyes.

PHILIPS by—"Amy," nineteen, good tempered, and good looking.

ELIZA by—"Harry Lermont," 5ft. 9in., dark, whiskers and moustache.

AMELIA by—"Happy Jack," twenty-three, 5ft. 6in., dark, and in the Navy; and—"Robert S.," twenty-three, steady, loving, and in the Navy.

HILDA by—"A. L. H.," twenty-seven, 5ft. 6in., and a widower; and—"W. M. A. S.," twenty-two, 5ft. 8in., and dark, with property in addition to his earnings.

S. L. B. by—"Harry Bunting," twenty-four, 5ft. 5in., dark, and in the Navy; and—"L. M.," twenty-two, medium height, black hair, good looking, fond of home, and a seaman in the Navy.

AUBREY by—"Ethel M.," twenty, tall, fair, light curly hair, loving, and fond of home; and—"Polly," eighteen, 5ft. 2in., fair, wavy brown hair, light gray eyes, loving, and lively.

HELENA and W. S.—The communications are unintelligible.

\* \* Now Ready, VOL. XIV. OF THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XIV. Price One Penny.

PART 86, FOR JULY, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

††† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

LONDON READER AND EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. WATSON.